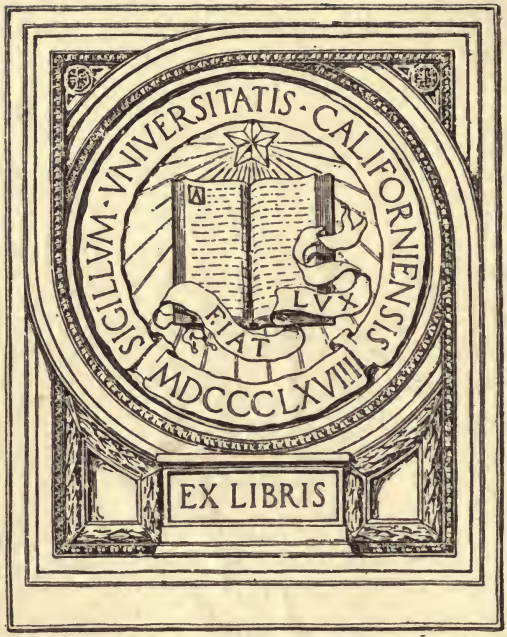
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The Elements of Greek Worship

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PREFACE.

THIS little book is designed as a guide to the spirit rather than to the letter of Greek religion. I have endeavoured to present, in language as simple as possible, the universal principles which underlay its inception and development; to indicate the racial sources from which its component parts were drawn; and to show that the observances and beliefs which constituted its worship and creed were the natural reflection of the highly composite national temperament of classical Greece.

Restrictions imposed by the narrow limits of a handbook, intended to supply the wants of students of Greek civilization to whom time and expense are a consideration, have precluded the discussion at length of many points of interest, and have rendered necessary the omission of all controversy, although I am well aware that some of the opinions advanced are regarded as heretical by many archæologists. But I have deemed it advisable to present one side of the question, and to leave to the student the interesting task of learning the other side at first hand from the works of those who uphold it: for, as in University Extension lecturing, so also in this

volume, my object is to stimulate rather than to teach, to provide the uninitiated reader with a standpoint from which he may approach the deeper and more detailed study of a fascinating subject. More especially I hope that it may prove acceptable to University Extension students, among whom, in the past six years, I have found an interest in Hellenic culture as surprising as it is encouraging, and whose great need has always been a handbook, or series of handbooks, which should present not merely an array of undigested facts, nor the chronicle of a past, dead beyond resurrection, but something of the humanity of the Greek. And to them especially I wish to dedicate this, my own attempt to produce such a handbook.

It is necessary to acknowledge my great debt to Professor Ridgeway, for the theories upon which the second chapter of this book is founded are those which he was the first to propound, and which I, as a Tripos student, had the honour of hearing from himself some time before "The Early Age of Greece" was published: and from that book I have also gathered many references with which my own reading would not otherwise have provided me. In the chapter upon "Mysteries," I have derived great assistance from the "Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion" of Miss J. E. Harrison. "Gentile and Jew" by J. J. I. Döllinger, though a less recent work, has proved a mine of information. Professor Percy Gardner's chapter upon "Sacrifice" in the "Manual of Greek Antiquities," and Mr. Robertson Smith's article on the same subject

in the Encyclopædia Britannica have also been of great use to me.

Mr. Frazer's "Pausanias" has proved invaluable, and it is from his translation that all quotations in the text from that author have been made. Mr. Lang's "Homeric Hymns," and the Iliad (Lang, Leaf and Myers), and Odyssey (Butcher and Lang) have been laid under contribution in like manner. The verse-translations are my own, and I must confess it to be unlikely that anyone should wish to dispute their authorship with me! Due acknowledgement is made in the notes, of indebtedness to other writers, and to other works of those mentioned above.

I have to thank the Rev. R. J. Walker for his kindness in reading the proofs, and in making several valuable suggestions, of which I have gladly availed myself.

I present this book, then, with mingled diffidence and hope: with diffidence, as conscious of its many shortcomings: with hope, that it may meet with the kindly reception that all honest endeavour may justly claim to deserve.

S. C. Kaines Smith.

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Elements of Greek Worship

CHAPTER I

THE SEVEN ELEMENTS OF WORSHIP

We are brought, under conditions of modern civilization, more constantly and more forcibly into contact with the ingenuity of man than with the power of God. Occasionally, it is true, some gigantic catastrophe, such as the recent earthquake at San Francisco, drives home the contrast between human and superhuman power. The announcement of the discovery of some star beyond all stars makes us realize for perhaps half-an-hour, that the world and humanity are but comparatively insignificant parts of an unthinkable infinity. But for the most part modern life has a tendency to make us extremely well satisfied with man as a power—a frame of mind which is not conducive to the discovery of the divine.

Modern man, as a general rule, comes in contact with nature at second-hand. He sees the forces of nature in their applied form, harnessed, as it were, by human ingenuity. Far otherwise was it with man in the dawn of the world. His relations with nature were at first-hand, with the "raw material"

of nature self-evident on every side. Cause and effect were but dimly co-ordinated in his mind, yet he could not but receive, together with the impression of his own incapability to direct nature, a distinct impression of the working of some immutable force, guiding the succession of natural phenomena which constituted his surroundings.

If it be granted that the regularity of natural phenomena inspired the idea of a ruling power, the next step follows easily. In the struggle for existence, man was pitted against nature in a never-ending fight. Thus, probably, the earliest conception of the ruling power was that of an antagonistic force, and as a natural corollary to this idea of antagonism between the human and the superhuman, FEAR, the first element of WORSHIP, came into existence.

Nevertheless, all manifestations of nature are obviously not inimical to man. As he discovered the fruits which the earth yielded to him of her bounty, as he learned to turn the succession of seasons to his own use, in seed-time and harvest, he realized that the workings of nature's laws were friendly in certain aspects.

Thus the ruling power, being capable of both good and evil intent towards man, might be persuaded to be kind more often than the reverse, if properly approached. Herein lies the second element of worship, which is SELF-INTEREST.

Man has now reached the stage in which he realizes the existence of two distinct aspects of the ruling power, interpreted in terms of man. Further

familiarity with nature breeds, not exactly contempt, but the consciousness of a common ground, upon which man and "God" may meet on equal terms. For whereas rivalry between man and man is as old as human nature, so a thousand aspects of nature display the rivalry of its constituent elements. The eternal war between sea and land, night and day, summer and winter, seems to divide nature against herself, and the ruling power becomes a group of powers, each jealous of the rule of its opposite in nature.

Again, those terrible examples of the caprice of nature—apparent infractions of natural law, such as earthquakes, eruptions and hurricanes, whose influence is extremely local as a rule—bear too strong a resemblance to the caprices of human passion for primitive man to overlook the parallel, and the presiding powers become invested by man with a complete set of human characteristics, including fits of unreasoning bad temper.

From this point it is scarcely a step to the endowment of the ruling power with a human form as well as a human mind, and the anthropomorphic idea is complete.

Man, therefore, has evolved a god who is in all respects, save in that of power over nature, like himself. At this stage SYMPATHY, the third element of worship, enters into our calculations—simultaneously, it should be remarked, with an idea closely approximating to that of incarnation.

Now it is plain that if the man can understand the god, the god can understand the man. Therefore

man can approach the god with a reasonable expectation that his acts of reverence will be rightly interpreted. In a primitive state of society, gifts are the recognised means of obtaining favours. Accordingly the man desirous of obtaining favours from his god, propitiates him with gifts in proportion to his divine dignity—that it, with the best he can give. Thus arises the custom of SACRIFICE, the fourth element of worship.

Now, there are two distinct kinds of giving, that which has for its object the obtaining of a favour, and that which returns thanks for a favour obtained. Of the two, the latter belongs to a considerably more advanced religious development than the former, as it implies the existence of gratitude, which is not in all probability a primitive emotion. But as gratitude is to some extent "a lively sense of favours to come," the alternation of propitiatory and thanksgiving sacrifice, with its attendant rites, constitutes, in course of time, a continuous form of SERVICE of the gods, which is the fifth element of worship. In other words, worship, from being a matter of intermittent occurrence dictated by expediency, becomes a kind of daily intercourse with the divine powers. It is obvious that this development belongs more properly to the community with its multifarious requirements than to the individual, and it is in this fact that the origin of tribal or national forms of religious service is to be sought.

The sixth element is one which belongs essentially to the corporate life. It is in the relations between one human being and another that the

necessity for law first arises. The man who is absolutely alone knows and needs no law. But with the institution of the family, which is sufficiently far back in the world's history to meet the purposes of practical discussion, the necessity for some sort of law arose. The first law was the law of might, which, in the nature of things, was also the law of parental authority. Thus the family was consolidated under the rule of the individual, and became the unit of offence and defence, complete in itself, and bound together by the observance of one code of conduct. This is the principle of obedience, upon which hangs all corporate life. As the family merged into the tribe, and the tribe into the nation, the observance of law increased in importance. The ruler is the nearest human approximation to the God, and in primitive society is usually his interpreter, the functions of king and priest being almost always united in one person. Thus the laws laid down by the human ruler, whether father or king, become divine laws, and their due observance an integral part of the service of the gods. The fact that these laws in almost all cases embody the same broad conception of right and wrong by no means proves an inborn moral sense in mankind, for close scrutiny will generally reveal the motive of self-preservation in the lawgiver. A particularly good instance is the law enjoining respect for the aged, which is so marked a feature of the majority of religious systems. Obviously, the lawgiver himself must eventually grow old, and, if might alone were right, must go

to the wall. He therefore finds protection in a divine command, which at once insures the continuity of law both political and moral. Thus, as DISCIPLINE is essential to the solidity of the human State, so also it is essential to, and is the sixth and most natural element of, worship.

Passing by a natural transition from the national to the universal, we arrive at the consideration of the seventh and last element of worship. It is plain that no one of the elements already emunerated carries worship beyond the province of mere expediency. But the element of discipline is an enormous advance, in that it is the first to impose restraints upon man in the interests of his fellow men. Such restraints cannot, however, be otherwise than irksome and therefore liable to infraction when opportunity offers, so long as they are dictated by expediency only. Not only the necessity, but the desire, to act rightly, must be present, if the moral law is to be universally observed. This desire to do good for its own sake may be expressed as the love of good. It is a mental attitude so advanced as to be an ideal only very partially attainable by humanity. Therefore it constitutes the elevating and vitalising principle of religion, tending to absorb all other considerations into itself as the conception of a lovable deity grows. A God to be lovable must be reasonable, just, merciful, removed above the sway of human emotion, and above all, omnipotent, for anything short of omnipotence in a god is impotence, which is contemptible, and therefore not lovable. From this it must follow

that a god must be the sole director of power, in other words, there can only be one God. Therefore the only perfect worship is the worship of one god, and, this being so, we find in polytheistic systems of worship no trace of the idea of the LOVE of humanity for God, save in the decay of the system. Once the idea of an entirely lovable God enters the mind of the Greek, his polytheistic system loses credence, and falls to pieces under the test.

CHAPTER II

NATURE GODS

To those accustomed to a positive and consistent religious system, the chief difficulty presented by the study of Greek religion is its complexity. It is in fact not one religion, but many, and in the process of fusion, the functions of the various deities have overlapped until the very identity of some of the gods has become a matter of doubt and controversy.

Physical conditions, from time immemorial, have dictated the course of history, political, social, and religious. And the physical geography of the Greek lands is of a kind which renders impossible the evolution of a uniform religious system. The sea-girt islands of the Aegean were no more effectually separated from each other than were the narrow valleys of the mainland, or the mountain fastnesses of rival kings. Save for a common race and speech and the shadowy story of a common origin, no tie bound state to state, or the community of an island to that of its nearest neighbour. Still as was shown in the previous chapter, where man is, some sort of religious system is bound to

spring up, even were it but in the circle of a single family: and thus the wonder is rather that the "unified" Greek religion of classical times was not a thousand times more complex and contradictory than as a matter of fact investigation shows it to have been.

It has been shown, however, that religion is older than the state. It is even older than the family, that earliest germ of the state: it is coeval with the race. The broad lines of a religious system will therefore be racial rather than tribal. Local myths and local peculiarities of nomenclature and the like are merely variations upon the main theme, which is constant throughout the race, and which in its turn is a variation upon the primaeval fact of worship as composed of the elements indicated in the last chapter.

Thus, much of the puzzling complexity of the Greek myth may be determined as internal to the race. On the other hand there are many important features in the Greek worship of classical times which may be seen to have no natural affinity with others equally important, and of which they are rather the rival than the duplicate. Of these pairs of conflicting characteristics one must be extra-racial, in other words, not primævally Greek.

From this it follows that the complexity of Greek religion arises from two sources—confusion of tribal traditions, and addition of alien elements. It will be our business to analyse the religion of classical times, and to classify the objects of its worship under headings expressive of these sources. This

done, it may be possible to estimate their place in the daily life of the Greek.

As the first element of worship is fear, we shall expect in the earliest gods something of the terrible, and in their worship something of that savagery which belongs to primitive methods of propitiating a hostile power. But as we have put self-interest second in the scale of development, we shall also seek a god whose powers embrace both friendly and hostile functions. Further, in dealing with the very dawn of a religious system, we shall expect to find such a deity standing almost, if not quite, alone, and connected with the other gods by ties only of the most shadowy nature. Nor will it be any surprise to us to find that in a highly civilized stage of development such a god has receded considerably from his primæval importance, and has been superseded, and his functions usurped, by deities of a more specialized nature.

Just such a god is Kronos, the almost discredited "father," in other words the predecessor, of Zeus the great king of Heaven from Homeric times onwards.

This god, who even in Homer's day had lost all actual influence, seems to have been almost exactly of that character which we should expect primitive man to evolve from his surroundings. Combining the functions of sway over the upper and lower world, a god of both life and death, he also presided over that symbol of life in death, the seed time and harvest, as his attribute in later times, the sickle, attests. The human sacrifice which was associated

with his worship implies, in Greece, an extreme antiquity, and may also be a symbol of his functions as a god of vegetation.

Described in legend as the son of Heaven and Earth, and the husband of Rhea—who is but Earth again—the myths concerning Kronos are grotesquely savage, and deal largely with his supersession by Zeus. Notable among them is the story that at Olympia he wrestled with the new-comer for the possession of the Kronian hill, and was defeated, though all through Greek history a certain family of priests known as Basilae (kings) made sacrifice to him every spring. The earliest legends connect him with Crete, Rhodes and Athens, seats, as will be seen, of the very remotest beginnings of Greek development, while possible traces of his worship survived in many parts of the Greek mainland, whence his very name had long since departed.

A moment's consideration of the value of names in primitive religion may be of service to us later. If it be granted that in Kronos we have a deity practically coeval with the race, it is not likely that his name would vary much in different localities in the first instance, for his personality was with the whole race from its cradle. On the other hand, it is a well-known trait of the primitive races to avoid naming any person who is especially sacred, so that, though the name may be known, it is scarcely ever used. Herodotus states that the earliest gods of Greece had no names.[1] Under such circumstances, as gods multiplied, the worship of the old

[1]Herod. ii. 51-52.

god would without difficulty be appropriated by the new, so that it is rather to the form of worship than to the name with which it is associated that we must look for the identification of the god in whose honour that worship was originated. For example, the Zeus to whom human sacrifice was offered on Mount Lykeion in Arcadia was no Zeus, but a far older god, possibly a form of Kronos himself. A good modern example, too, is the fact that to St. Nicholas, the patron saint of the modern Greek sailor, reverence is paid on the same sites, and often after the same fashion, as it was paid to the ancient Poseidon, the sea-god whom the saint has dispossessed only in name.[2]

Kronos may then be characterized as the god of man before the evolution of corporate life, and the nearest approach to the monotheistic idea which we shall find in Greek religion. Even his human form is more or less accidental, and we find remote traces of his embodiment in the form of a horse, which has been widely regarded by many races as symbolic of the spirit of vegetation.

However, with the crystallization of the anthropomorphic idea in the Greek mind, the third element of worship, sympathy, came into play, and the Greek was not slow to discover the more obvious points of correspondence between himself and nature. Thus, the reproductive aspect of nature was soon seen to be reflected in human motherhood, and the essentially female aspect of the "life-giving

[2]On every Greek ship is a small shrine with an "eikon" of S. Nicholas, before which a light is always kept burning.

earth" as Homer calls it in a most beautiful passage,[3] was symbolized by a female deity.

Whether the name of Dēmeter may be taken to mean the Earth-Mother (De=Earth, mêter=mother) or no, it is certain that she presided over precisely that province of nature which would justify the supposition. She it was who first gave the knowledge of the sowing of corn, and of cultivation of the land. Her influence in entirely benign, and as a natural result, the tone of her worship is rather that of respect and thanksgiving than of fear and propitiation. The Eleusinian mysteries, to which reference will be made in a subsequent chapter, perhaps constituted the highest point reached by Greek worship.

That aspect of the harvest which was symbolized by human sacrifice, and stories of the burial and resurrection of the god, in the case of Kronos, is in the case of Demeter presented in the beautiful and intensely human story of the rape of Persephone, who, carried off by Aidoneus, ruler of the lower world, was sought everywhere in vain by her grief-stricken mother.

Demeter cursed the earth with barrenness till her daughter should be found. When at last Persephone re-appeared from the dark world below, the earth broke once more into leaf and blossom, with the waking spring. But the daughter of Demeter was compelled to spend the third part of every year

[3]Il. iii. 243. For an interesting commentary on this word "life-giving" see "On Translating Homer" (Matthew Arnold), Ch. i.; See also Dr. Hawtrey's beautiful translation (quoted at length by Arnold in the same essay.)

below the earth, for while there, she had tasted the pomegranate, the symbol of fertility from the multitude of its seeds. The meaning of the story is too obvious to need elucidation. Three points are to be noted: First, that the fact of nature which in the old propitiatory worship of fear was symbolised by the sacrifice of a human life, is, in the new religion of sympathy, transferred to the person of a goddess who yearly performs the sacrifice for her people's good. In the second place the relationship between mother and daughter is not merely stated, but is made the pivot upon which the story hangs, thus completing the bond of sympathy between the divine and human. The third point arises out of the second. In primitive societies, descents are reckoned through the mother, for the simple reason that by this method alone can any descent be reckoned with certainty before the institution of marriage. But this state of affairs did not constitute the female the ruling sex. Thus it is no matter for surprise, that, while the primæval all-power is male, the first deity of the primitive community should be female, especially as the relationship of one deity to another is a factor in the worship; for the social state of the gods will naturally approximate to that of their worshippers.

Here we are confronted with a new fact in the formation of a pantheon. The family being the unit of human corporate life, the unit of polytheism will be the divine family: with the institution of marriage, the father assumes the greater importance as being the head of

the family, and the male deities follow suit.

Thus in any pantheon evolved by analogy with the human family, four members, typical of these four estates of human existence, may be regarded as essential.

If the test be applied to the Greek pantheon of classical times, it will be found at once that most of the estates are duplicated. From this, fusion of two or more families into one system may be argued. In fact we have come back to the original statement, that the Greek religion is not one system but the combination of several. If we succeed in discovering the source of each of these systems, and in stating, with some degree of certainty, which of them are indigenous, and which of external origin, and further, in identifying such isolated members of foreign systems as may have obtained a footing in Olympus from whatever cause, we may then deal more surely with the relations between the Greek and his gods.

CHAPTER III

THE ORIGINS OF GODS

THE next task is to discover to which of the gods may be assigned the representation of the several estates of human life emunerated in the last chapter. In order to accomplish this, certain tests must be formulated, and the deities classified in accordance with the principles embodied in those tests.

As it has been laid down that the divine family is formed by analogy with the human, we shall call father-gods, those gods whose position most nearly approaches that of the human father, and by a corresponding process we shall discover the mother-, son-, and daughter-deities.

Maturity and capability to govern and direct, and to impose laws, are the proper characteristics of the human father. The province of the mother lies in the regulation of the household, the care of children, and the upholding of the sanctity of marriage. The son will follow those pursuits, active or skilful, which the father has left behind with his youth, and the daughter will find occupation in the womanly handicrafts.

Briefly, the province of the more mature estate lies in *being*, that of the younger, in *doing*. Thus

the gods whose mere existence is their patent of authority—who rule the world without especial reference to man—will be the parent-gods, while those who direct the arts of mankind will be the sons and daughters of the divine family.

It is not to be expected that these tests should exactly fit every conceivable case, for there are son-deities whose powers verge very closely upon those of the father gods, while on the other hand the irresistible reaction towards monotheism tends to concentrate the power in the hands of one god, to the detriment of others whose claim to the parental estate is perhaps of greater antiquity.

However, as a general rule the tests will be found to answer, and we may now proceed to apply them to the pantheon of classical times.

At the period during which Greece as a whole reached the zenith of her power, political, artistic, and religious (viz: the fifth century, B.C.), there existed a more or less pan-Hellenic circle of gods, whom we may now describe briefly. Of these, Zeus, king of heaven, is the undisputed head, and alike in his rule over gods and men, lays claim to the position of the first among the father deities.

Next to him is Poseidon, the god of the sea, of whom says Zeus himself, "This his heart feareth not—to call himself the peer of me."[1]

Among mother goddesses, Hera, whose marriage with Zeus was yearly celebrated at Argos, stands preëminent. A more shadowy personality is Dione, the wife of Zeus only at Dodona, in the north of

[1] Il. xv. 166.

Epirus, whose name proclaims her as the female counterpart of Zeus. Of Demeter we have already spoken as a mother goddess. The two gods who, as presiding over the arts of men, rank especially as son-gods, are Hermes, the old pastoral increase-god of Arcadia, and Apollo, the golden haired neatherd and bowman.

A third son-god is Dionysos, familiarly reckoned the god of vintage, but in reality of a far more comprehensive character. Of daughter-goddesses Athena is by far the greatest, with her strangely combined characteristics of wisdom, womanly skill, and aptitude for war. Beside her is Artemis, sister of Apollo, the presiding deity of young animals and children, and goddess of the chase, who shares with her brother the mastery of the bow. Persephone, the daughter of Demeter, is now almost exclusively regarded as queen of the under-world. Yet another goddess is Aphrodite, the goddess of human love. With her is associated Ares, the savage god of war, to whom no great importance was ever assigned by the Greeks.

A father-god who at first sight seems to stand almost alone is Hephaistos, the great worker of metal, and the god of fire. But for him we shall find a place in due course.

Now, while this list does not by any means exhaust the number of the Greek deities, it includes all the main aspects of divinity familiar to the Greek, while certain other personalities may be shown to be merely local forms of these, the principal figures in the Olympian circle.

The first fact that strikes us, even in this limited enumeration, is that all the estates are represented at least in duplicate, while some have three or more representatives of the first importance. To discover the causes of these duplications is a long step towards fixing the origins of the various gods. For if we admit that but one representative of each estate is a *necessity* to the primitive community, we must as a consequence recognise in the classical pantheon, the simultaneous existence, either of indigenous and foreign cults, or of religious systems originating in different local conditions of the same race. It has been shown that Demeter and Persephone, or Kore, the "daughter" unnamed, belong to a stratum of worship removed but a single cult of step from the primitive Kronos. Like that early spirit of vegetation and god of the upper and lower worlds, she assumes the form of a horse, at Phigaleia, in Arcadia, where she is called the Black Demeter, and has a distinctly chthonian, or lower-world, character. This part of her nature (but not the form) is later assumed by her daughter Persephone, who by the time of Homer, is no longer her daughter, but merely the dread queen of the lower world, while Demeter herself has lost much of her importance among the gods. Thus in the analysis of the constituents of fifth century worship, we may place Demeter and Persephone in a deeper stratum of antiquity than any of the other gods.

Pursuing our system of applying formulated tests as a means of analysis, we may now state the

characteristics which it is right to demand of the truly "primæval" god. Those gods who do not conform to our tests we may classify as either racial or accidental introductions with the native pantheon. A god, to be indigenous to the Greek pantheon, must have his origin in some locality within the compass of the Greek lands of primitive times. More than this, he must be the original god in that locality, owning no predecessors in his own particular sphere of action—he must be aboriginal as well as indigenous. The only admissible modification of this latter test is in the case of one local aboriginal god who absorbs a similar god of a different Greek locality.

ZEUS. So firmly established is the worship of Zeus in classical times, and so universally is he regarded as the father of gods and men, that examination of his claim to the title seems almost presumptuous. The stories of his birth and upbringing belong to Crete and Arcadia, the oldest seats of Greek worship. At Dodona in Epirus, he had his oracle, and is called by Homer, Pelasgian Zeus. That the Pelasgians were the aboriginal inhabitants of Greece, Herodotus,[2] Thucydides[3] and Strabo,[4] (who quotes Ephorus,) Homer, Hesiod, Aeschylus and Euripides all agree, and indeed the concensus of ancient Greek opinion endorsed this view. Arcadia was regarded as their place of origin,

[2]Herod i. 56. ii. 51. 11-56., etc.
[3]Thuc. i. 3. 2.
[4]Strabo 220. See also Paus. viii. 4. 1.

and in Crete they formed one section, probably the oldest, of the five-fold population of Achæans, Eteokretes, Kydonians, Dorians and Pelasgians. Thessaly was called Pelasgian Argos, and according to Strabo, the peoples of Epirus were also possibly of Pelasgian origin.

Is Zeus a genuine Pelasgian deity? If so, we shall expect to find that the ethical aspect of the Zeus of classical times is to a certain extent reflected in his worship on primitive Pelasgian sites. We shall expect to find that the myths connected with his name in such places bear a recognisable affinity to his function as a god. And further we shall demand that those myths shall be free from all suggestion of the usurpation by him of the power of an older god. To apply these tests we must determine the ethical nature of Zeus.

Firstly then, he is essentially a *god*. He is brightness, light, the illimitable heaven, the life-giving principle which makes life possible, without being personally concerned in its procreation. He is not a mere god of fertility, nor a mere god of the lightning and the cloud, nor a mere god of the under-world. He is all of these, and is superior to all of them. His powers are universal and all-embracing, and reflect no narrow and primitive outlook upon nature. Such was the conception called up in the Greek mind by the name of Zeus, and embodied in the great Olympian statue by Pheidias. When we come to examine his origin and worship in Greece we shall not find this universality of function reproduced.

By his epithet of Cretan-born, and the general acceptance of the legend which bears out the name, we are induced to consider his position in that Pelasgian island first of all. There, he is the son of Kronos and Rhea, born despite his father's efforts to suppress his birth, and protected from that father's violence by the Kuretes, who drowned his infant cries with the clash of cymbals. Exposed on Mount Ida, and suckled by a goat, or as Athenæus says, by a sow, the infant god grew up and dispossessed his father Kronos. He was worshipped in the Dictæan cave on Mount Ida, and at Praisos, also in Crete, a sow was the first offering of his sacrifice.

Now the pig is nowhere else sacred to Zeus, but belongs especially to deities of the lower world, among them to Dionysos-Atys, or Zagreus, whom we shall find to have been a primitive chthonian and vegetation deity of Phrygia, to whom also the goat and the bull were sacred. Therefore Zeus Kretagenes is not Zeus, nor is the god whose function he usurped indigenous to Crete.

Next, on Mount Lykeion in Arcadia, Lycaon (son of Pelasgos, and founder of Lycosura, the oldest city in the world, according to the Arcadian legend), founded a sanctuary to Zeus, and instituted child sacrifice in his honour. Here, too, is a story of the birth of Zeus, at Cretea, a place on Mount Lykeion. But the story appears to be an imported variant of the Cretan tale, and the form of worship accords with that of a vegetation god. In close connection with this aspect, is the function of the

Lykeian god as the controller of rain. Rain gods of all lands are for the most part worshipped on high mountains, and human sacrifice belongs to their worship in many places. This form of Zeus was the national Arcadian god, worshipped always on mountain tops, and frequently with human sacrifice. He is an exclusively physical god, and there is evidence of conflict between his primitive worship and that of the higher conception of Zeus in the story that Lykaon was turned into a wolf (lykos) as a punishment for setting human flesh before Zeus when entertaining him unawares. It is possible that the story is a remnant of totemistic worship of a wolf-god, the patron of a wolf clan. At any rate it does not accord with the generally accepted worship of Zeus either in Homeric or historic times. The primitive god of Arcadia was not then Zeus, but a formless and nameless rain-god of purely physical functions.

At Dodona in Epirus, on the other hand, we seem to come in contact with the genuinely indigenous god. For in this sanctuary, situated upon Mount Tomaros, on the very northern limit of the Greek world, is "King Zeus, Pelasgian god of Dodona, he who dwells afar, lord of wintry Dodona," celebrated by Homer.[5] Here was his oracle, where his will was interpreted from the whispering of the wind in his sacred oak tree, and the bubbling of the stream which ran through his sanctuary, while in the valley below he was worshipped as the god of the dew, and in company with the earth-mother,

[5] Il. xvi. 233.

Dione, he received honour as the god "who was, and is and will be,"[6] the god who had no predecessor.

The Dodonæan Zeus is then the original Zeus, and he is deliberately called Pelasgian. But Strabo was doubtful as to the true Pelasgian nature of Epirus, and at any rate it is clear, that in the principle seat of the Pelasgian race, Zeus was not indigenous. His connection with Dione, too, occurs only at Dodona, while in Greece proper he is the husband of Hera, who is not an earth-mother at all, but a goddess of the human institution of marriage. Therefore, while it is not doubtful that Dodonæan Zeus was the aboriginal god of the extreme north of Greece, nor that he was the germ of the Zeus of classical times, it is equally certain that he was not identical with the aboriginal god of the undisputably Pelasgian sites of southern Greece.

This contention is borne out by the fact that Olympia, the great centre of Zeus-worship in historic times, was not yet in the possession of Zeus even in Homeric times. The story of the wrestling with Kronos for the Kronian hill, is sufficient evidence of the importation of the cult, while the Olympian oracle of Zeus was served by the priestly family of the Iamidae, who traced their descent, not from Zeus, but from Iamos, son of Apollo[7] and Evadne, who was the grand-daughter of Poseidon,[8]

[6]Paus. x. 12. 10.
[7]Paus. vi. 2. 5.
[8]Pindar. Ol. 6.

and these same Iamidae remained always citizens of the unimportant Arcadian township of Stymphalos, which was especially connected with Poseidon. Zeus was not, therefore, indigenous at Olympia, for two gods stand between him and the necessary qualification.

At Argos, Zeus is the husband of Hera, who is the predominating deity of the place, for the land of Argolis belonged very especially to her, and her oldest sanctuary was here. Moreover the very oldest of Greek traditions deal with the foundation of the Pelasgian cities of Argolis—Phoronicum, Midea, Tiryns, Mycenae and Argos. Thus if Zeus is an aboriginal god in Argolis, he may fairly claim to belong to the earliest stratum of Greek religion.

A "Zeus" with three eyes was worshipped at Argos. These three eyes were said to symbolize power over heaven, earth, and the lower world. But this monstrous god is described by Pausanias as "the paternal god of Priam," king of Troy, and he states that the image was brought from Troy to Argos.[9]

This Trojan god was not the Zeus whose marriage was celebrated yearly with Hera, who for her part, yearly recovered her virginity through purification by water. In this ceremony we have traces of a very early local worship, but in it there is nothing essential to Zeus, who is entirely secondary to Hera at Argos. This fact is explained when we learn that Poseidon, before Zeus, was the husband of Hera at Argos, and that he contended with her for

[9]Paus. ii. 24. 3.

the possession of the land. At Argos then, Zeus is neither aboriginal nor indigenous.

As his titles of Patroos, Gamelios and Genethlios (Zeus the father, god of marriage and of the family) are almost certainly derived from his connection with Hera, the marriage goddess, they cannot be more ancient than that connection, and therefore are not aboriginal. His function as Zeus Teleios, he who accomplishes the hopes of mankind, especially in the matter of the birth of children, owns the same limitations from the same cause. As Zeus Herkeios the god of the hearth, he may perhaps claim a greater antiquity, but not in Pelasgian strongholds, while as Zeus Phratrios, the god of the clans, he belongs to the more developed Hellenic religion, when clan totemism was passing away.

At Athens we find two forms of his worship, both of which bear the stamp of primitive corn-spirit worship. As Zeus Georgos (the Farmer) he is a god of crops and harvest, but it is as Zeus Polieus (the god of the city!) that his physical character is best revealed by the ritual of his worship. At the harvest time, in the festival of the Diipolia or Bouphonia, an ox was slain with an axe at the altar of Zeus Polieus, and the slayer, who held the office by right of descent, and bore the title of Bouphonos (*murderer* of the ox) then fled; the axe was tried for the murder, found guilty and thrown into the sea, after which the Bouphonos returned. The skin of the ox was stuffed and set up as though he had returned to life, and the flesh of the animal was eaten by the priests. This

strange ceremony, of which Pausanias gives a detailed account,[10] is plainly symbolical of the death, burial and resurrection of the corn, and as such is common to all nations. The "murder" of the bull, and the traditional flight of the first "Bouphonos" to Crete, draw our attention to the intensely sacred character of the bull in that island, where "Zeus" has already been seen to be rather a form of chthonic Dionysos-Atys, who was frequently symbolized in bull-form. Moreover, the bull, in conjunction with the double axe, was especially sacred in prehistoric Greece, as excavation has shown, particularly in Crete and Mycenae, where the historic Zeus is not indigenous. Therefore the Diipolia, the oldest ceremony at Athens with which the name of Zeus is associated, is not really a Zeus-worship at all. Nor is Zeus indigenous at Athens in the sphere implied by the name Polieus (god of the city), for his worship never approached that of Athena Polias, with whom, as with Hera at Argos, Poseidon, and not Zeus, competed for the supremacy in Attica.

The worship of Olympian Zeus is of historic date at Athens. Whether the epithet be connected with Mount Olympus, or with roots "lamp" (=bright) or "ylympi" (=high) its actual significance from Homeric times onward was "heavenly," and the word was applied to other gods as well as Zeus without reference to any special place or function.

[10]Paus. i. 24. 4. For examples of kindred ceremonies in many lands see Frazer "The Golden Bough," vol. ii. 277. sqq.

If Zeus is not indigenous in Argolis, Crete, Arcadia, and Attica, all strongholds of the indigenous race: if the very priests of his Olympian oracle are descended from his rival Poseidon: and if his only Homeric oracle is situated on the uttermost north-western limit of prehistoric Greece, we may assume that there was once a time when Zeus was a newcomer among the gods of Greece, relying almost pathetically upon the support of Hera to substantiate his claim to supremacy.[11]

POSEIDON. Poseidon is the god of salt water and the father of rivers. He is at once the earth-shaker, and the preserver of the earth—in the oldest legends the husband of the Earth and father of her children. On his moods depend the lives of mariners. He is the natural god of a mainland whose seaboard is enormous in proportion to its area, and of a people scattered over innumerable islands. Indeed the prosperity of Greece has always depended upon its waters, whether of stream or sea. Poseidon is therefore a *probable* god of its primitive people.

In dealing with prehistoric religion, probability and tradition are our only grounds of argument, and tradition here agrees with probability. Side by side with the god of vegetation, the presiding deity of the waters existed from time immemorial.

[11] Il. xv. 49. sqq. "If thou, of a truth, O ox-eyed lady Hera, would'st hereafter abide of one mind with me among the immortal gods, thereon would Poseidon, howsoever much his wish be contrariwise, quickly turn his mind otherwhere after thy heart and mine" (tr. Lang, Leaf and Myers.)

But further, his personality is constant, as an appeal to tradition will show.

The earliest traditional power of Greece was the sea-power of Crete,[12] and in Crete we have Zeno-Poseidon (Zeus-Poseidon) at once the ruler of the sea and the elemental thunder god. The Iamidae, servants of Zeus in historic times, traced descent through Iamos to Poseidon, and Stymphalos in Arcadia was their original home, on the shore of the Stymphalian lake, where there was an ancient sanctuary of Poseidon. As to Argolis, Perseus, the founder of Mycenae, was descended from Poseidon (see page 68) and the walls of all the great Pelasgian cities of the land of Argos were said by tradition to have been built by the Cyclops, sons of Poseidon. At Lycosura, the oldest city of Arcadia, Poseidon is even regarded as the father of Demeter.[13] At Athens, he was worshipped side by side with Erechtheus, the first hero of Athens, who became, indeed the chthonic counterpart of the god himself, and the sacrifice to both god and hero was performed at one altar by a family of priests called Butadae, descendents of Poseidon, (possibly here in bull-form, as also in Crete, where the Minotaur is almost certainly a form of Poseidon.) On the Acropolis at Athens was a salt spring which legend pointed out as the trace of a blow from the trident of Poseidon. Even at Olympia, before the chariot races sacred to Zeus, sacrifice was made to a mysterious spirit known as Taraxippos (the

[12]Thuc. i. 4.
[13]Paus. viii. 37. 10.

Frightener of Horses) who was wont to cause horses to shy at a certain point in the course, and whom Pausanias identified as Horse-Poseidon.[14] A statue of Horse-Poseidon with Horse-Hera also stood at the starting point.[15] This connection of Poseidon with horses is a characteristic which he shares with Kronos, Demeter, Hera, Athena, and Ares, but whereas in the case of the first two cases the horse is symbolical of the corn-spirit, Hera is Horse-Hera from her ancient connection with Poseidon. Athena, as the goddess of all kinds of skill, is the goddess of horsemanship, and Ares receives his title from the fame of the horses of his native Thrace. The origin of the title of Horse-Poseidon is obscure. But Herodotus gives to the name of Poseidon a Libyan origin, saying that the Pelasgians had no names for their gods.[16] Libya was anciently famous for its horses, and it is probable that horses were very early imported into Greece from Libya. If the chief god of the Libyans gave his name to the chief god of the Pelasgians, at the same time that Libya was giving horses to Greece, it is easy to see how the two facts would become linked together in the title of Horse-Poseidon.

We have already noted the stories of contests of Poseidon with Hera for the land of Argos, and with Athena for Attica, and the defeat of Poseidon in both cases. If the worship of the sea-god had never

[14]Paus. vi. 20. 15-19.
[15]Paus. v. 15. 5.
[16]Herod. ii. 50-52.

been paramount in these places, the stories would lack a *raison d'etre*. But while there is but one sea, lands are many, and as the settlement of the land assumed a more permanent character, the local divinities of many lands were certain gradually to oust a god of so universal a character as Poseidon, who was thus eventually driven to confine his incontestable supremacy to the indivisible portion of his kingdom, the sea. The predominance of female deities reflects a very primitive state of society in which descents were reckoned through the mother for the sake of certainty. But with the advance of civilization and the increased stability of marriage, a man-god became necessary, and this necessity was supplied by the new-comer, Zeus, who thus supplanted Poseidon as the ancestor of many Pelasgian founders of cities. It was a commonplace that though the Corinthians claimed Zeus as the father of Corinthos,[17] he was in fact the son of the Sun, who had won the land of Corinth from Poseidon, the latter retaining the Isthmus[18] only. Thus Poseidon antedates Zeus by far, at Corinth.

Poseidon is therefore a primæval god whose power tends to recede rather than to advance in pan-Hellenic estimation, although as a matter of fact he remained always of greater importance than Zeus in the parts of Greece which retained an unmixed Pelasgian descent down to historical times.

HERA. Hera is not a nature-goddess at all, but a

[17]Paus. ii. 1. 1. Pindar Nem. vii. 103.
[18]Paus. ii. 1. 6.

goddess of purely human aspect and origin. She is the goddess of women and of their rights and privileges in their relations with men. Her earliest form is indicated by her title "boöpis" which is generally translated "ox-eyed" but actually means "cow-faced." Io, of Argos, who was changed into a cow, may be identified with this totem-form of Hera, and many little clay images found on the site of the "Mycenæan" sanctuary of Hera in Argolis represent a woman with attachments like the horns of a cow, who may be regarded as Hera.

The bull, as the remains, of the same period as these little figures, show, was the representative of the principal "Mycenæan" god, and thus the cow was the natural representative of his female counterpart.

The places in which Hera is found to have been most prominent are all intimately connected with the indigenous Greek civilization. Argos was her especial home, and it was here that her oldest and most venerated sanctuary had existed from days long before Perseus. The story of her origin, as told at Stymphalos in Arcadia, was that Hera had been brought up by Temenos, son of Pelasgos, who founded there three sanctuaries in her honour as the Child, the Woman, and the Widow.[19] Samos claimed to be her birth-place, and Pausanias saw there the willow-tree under which she was born.[20]

But the people of Argos claimed that the Samian image of Hera was taken thither from

[19]Paus. viii. 22. 2.
[20]Paus. vii. 4. 4.

Argos by the Argonauts. This story, together with that of the contest between Hera and Poseidon for Argolis,[21] is merely indicative of the absorbtion by the local Argive goddess, of the similar goddesses of other localities.

The greatest ceremony in the worship of Hera was the "holy marriage," which may have given rise to the slight confusion which occurs locally as to the true origin of the goddess. It has already been noted that Hera renewed her virginity yearly by means of purification by water, and that her marriage with Zeus was then re-enacted with great ceremony. This observance was followed with very little variation, not only at Argos, where it was the principle event in the religious year, but also in Samos, Bœotia, Crete, Athens, and Arcadia, and even so far afield as Falerii in Italy. In several of these places there was also a story—reflected in the title of "the Widow" at Stymphalos—which represented Hera to have left Zeus in anger, and to have hidden herself among the mountains, till she was decoyed back by a trick. This story doubtless arose to account for the custom which obtained, of hiding the image of Hera in a lonely place for some time before the "holy marriage," though the concealment of the image was really no more than the retirement of the bride for some time before her marriage, a recognised custom in human marriage from remote antiquity, surviving in the modern superstition which pronounces it unlucky for a bridegroom to see his bride on the wedding day before he meets

[21]Paus. ii. 15. 5., ii. 22. 5.

her at the altar. The "holy marriage" is therefore so close a copy of the ordinary human marriage-rite, that it is clearly intended to emphasize the sanctity of marriage, as being under the especial protection of Hera, and cannot be construed as an allegory of the reproductive earth, in spite of the epithet "Flowery" which is applied to Hera, and of her title Akraia (of the Heights) at Corinth, where the story of the slaughter of Medea's children at the altar of Hera Akraia probably enshrines some tradition of human sacrifice. Corinth was an appanage, in prehistoric days, of Argolis, where Hera was the supreme goddess, and it seems highly probable that Hera supplanted at Corinth some primitive and savage goddess, not "of the Heights" generally, but of "the Height" of the huge rock of Acrocorinth in particular—a goddess more akin to Artemis than to Hera in the ritual of her worship.

For if Hera was the Earth, it seems strange that she should have prayed to the Earth (see Ch. vii, p. 126, note 28) for a child, and stranger still that her children should have been so few. She is, as a matter of fact, a goddess, not of motherhood but of womanhood, especially of woman in her relations with man, and her predominant aspect is that of the wife—a wife extremely jealous of her privileges and prerogatives. She belongs, therefore, to a period when woman first received her great charter, that of marriage, and so stands for the beginning of all social stability, as expressed by descent reckoned through the father, instead of through the mother, as in the older day of promiscuity. Thus, though

undoubtedly Pelasgian, she represents the more advanced stages of the Pelasgian civilization.

DIONE. This nature-goddess, indigenous to Dodona, is associated with Zeus only in that place, where he also has been found to have been established from remote antiquity. When, however, Zeus came south, he left his wife behind, and contracted a marriage for dynastic reasons, as it were, with a goddess whom he found firmly installed in Pelasgian Greece, and with whom he was obliged to be allied, for the sake of his own stability, exactly as Pelops, the Lydian founder of the race of Agamemnon and Menelaos, married the daughter of Oenomaos of Pisa, in order to strengthen his position, and as Menelaos espoused Helen of native Poseidonian descent, and through her inherited the throne of Sparta from her father Tyndareus, the last of the race of Perseus. Dione then, belongs to a different religious system from Hera, and one which had its origin in the north, not in undoubtedly Pelasgian Greece, whither she was unable to penetrate owing to the strength of the native goddesses.

HERMES. Hermes is called the son of Zeus and Maia, a nymph,[22] but as a matter of fact he is purely Pelasgian. He is the principal god of Arcadia, and the Zeus upon whom he is fathered has been shown to be rather the primitive and nameless god of the heights to whom the name of Zeus was given later. Hermes is also identified on Mount Cyllene with

[22]See Pedigree on page 68.

Aepytus, the ancient Arcadian king, who was the descendant of Gaia through Arkas, the eponymous hero of Arcadia. He is the god of the shepherds, the god of young things, human and beast, and of procreation of the animal kingdom. This is amply proved by the crude symbols of his earliest worship.[23] He is therefore a nature-god of the second degree, in that he belongs not so much to nature itself, as to the use of nature by man. He has, however, his mysterious side, as the leader of souls to the under-world, being thus the presiding deity of both extremes of life, its extrance and exit. As Zeus, the great god of Homeric Greece, belongs to a later stratum than that of Pelasgian Greece, it is interesting to note the attitude of the Homeric poems towards Hermes. As the chthonic deity he is treated with respect. As the messenger of Zeus, he is placed in a comparatively subordinate position, while the Homeric hymn to Hermes shows him in an almost ridiculous light. Regarded as the younger brother of Apollo, he is represented as cunning and frivolous, and the earliest incidents of his career constitute him the patron of thieves and cattle-lifters. In the Odyssey, in the song of Demodokos,[24] he appears as a coarse humourist. In short he is treated with the scant respect that belongs to the somewhat discredited deity of a conquered race. But in view of the extremely primitive nature of his functions and of his Arcadian origin, to say nothing of the veneration with which

[23]Herod. ii. 51.
[24]Od. viii. 338.

he was regarded in so ancient a seat of the Greek race as Athens, it is evident that he must be a god of the earlier stratum, and the suspicion therefore arises that the poems were composed for a race other than that which first evolved the idea of the god of increase and plenty.

Temples of Hermes were few and far between. But the god of travellers was better worshipped at wayside shrines, and as the god of crowded city streets, his symbol appeared at every corner. He was the god of luck in every department of life, and thus presided over commerce, athletics, and gambling. He was, in fact, the natural god of the occupations and wealth of every stage of civilization, from the pastoral dawn of Arcadian life to the keen barterings of the crowded sea-ports and cities of full-grown Hellas.

Apollo. Apollo is a god of a considerably more advanced type than any of those hitherto discussed. His chief powers are essentially supernatural. Prophecy, divination and oracular instruction belong very especially to him, and he is also the lord of death by pestilence and plague, a power symbolized by his bow and arrows. The wide-spread repute of his oracle at Delphi, of which he obtained possession by barter from Poseidon,[25] caused his worship to become universal throughout Greece, while his functions as the dealer of pestilence invested him also with the converse titles of Akesios (the healer), and Alexikakos (he who wards off evil).

[25] Paus. x. 5. 6. sqq.

When Asklepios, in Homer but a mortal man, became the god of medicine, it was upon Apollo that he was fathered, and the greatest family of soothsayers in Greece, the Iamidae, though descended in the first instance from Poseidon, claimed Apollo as the father of Iamos, the ancestor to whom first the power of divination was given. It was thus as a god of high supernatural powers that his worship spread, though he had other powers accorded him in local worships, indicative of fusion with local deities of nature. For example, as Apollo Smintheus (the slayer of field-mice), as Parnopios (Averter of Locusts) Karneios (god at once of herdsmen and war—a Dorian form), Delphinios (Controller of the Sea) Nomios (the law-giver—in Arcadia), he is plainly exercising functions appropriate to local needs, and is either to be identified with local divinities who preceded him, or regarded as having filled "a long-felt want" for the first time.

A third aspect of Apollo is found at Athens, where he was worshipped as Lykeios (wolf-Apollo) at the Lykeion, just outside the city. Here he is practically identified with the wolf, which was most probably the totem of some primitive clan living upon the spot, who as civilization advanced, identified their primitive luck-beast with the god of their adoption, eventually assigning to Apollo the position of the destroyer of wolves. A possible parallel to this development is the case of the Minotaur, which may have been in the first place a bull-form of Poseidon, to which human sacrifice was made, the legend of its destruction by Theseus enshrining

the story of the transition to the more civilized sacrifice of bulls to the anthropomorphic Poseidon.

Thus it will be seen that Apollo is a god of very varied functions, but that his predominant characteristics are those of a civilization considerably removed from the earliest stages of its development. An examination of the myths concerning him will perhaps make clear his origin in Greece and the manner of his coming.

The generally accepted story of his birth represented him as the son of Zeus by Leto, and stated that he was born on the floating island of Delos, raised from the depths of the sea by Poseidon to be a refuge for Leto from the persecutions of Herà, the indignant spouse of Zeus, who, when Apollo was born, sent the Python, a serpent, to devour the child. The victory of Apollo over the Python may be regarded as expressing the triumph of his worship over that of some deity of the Pelasgian stratum (perhaps Poseidon), for the slaying of the monster was regarded as a murder, from the guilt of which Apollo had to be purified. The introduction of Poseidon into the story is again reminiscent of an older worship of the sea-god, with Gaia, in Delos, before it became the sacred island of Apollo. At Branchidae in Miletus, Apollo was still in process of supplanting Poseidon in historic times. Here then is evidence of conflict between an older and a newer worship. The story which represents Apollo as adopting Hermes as his younger brother in return for the gift of the lyre, whereby Apollo became the patron of music,

as Hermes was of eloquence, indicates the friendly fusion of two forms of worship, as also does the adoption of Apollo as the law-giver—the god of advancing civilization in Arcadia. Again Apollo is associated with Poseidon in building the walls of Troy, which would seem to place him in the oldest stratum of the gods.

The fact of the matter is, that apart from mere local identifications, there were two distinct Apollos, neither of whom was actually indigenous to Greece. The son of Zeus was the Apollo of supernatural powers, and was evolved by the same race of worshippers as Zeus, a race which attached more importance to the abstract than to the naturalistic aspect of divinity.

The other Apollo is he who is associated in friendly relations with Poseidon, especially in Asia Minor. This is a god of Lycian origin, who, though not to be confounded with Helios (the sun) approaches more nearly to the functions of a nature-god than his namesake of the Greek mainland. It is as a god of the arts of civilization that he held common ground with Apollo of Delphi, and became identified with the god of prophecy, while it is possible that a chance resemblance between his epithet Lykios (Lycian) on the one hand, and the name Lykeios (the wolf god) on the other, led to his becoming the god of what was once a wolf-clan at Athens. Out of this identification may also have arisen the fathering of Apollo upon Hephaistos at Athens, for when we come to the consideration of that god, we shall find him to be distinctively

Pelasgian in his history. The confusion of Apollo with the oracular god of Crete, and the consequent assignment of him to a Cretan father Corybas, a name suggestive in itself of Dionysiac associations, arose from the pre-eminent repute of the Apolline oracle at Delphi, while it is more than probable that to the name of that sanctuary and to its earlier association with Poseidon he owed his sea power as Delphinios (of Dolphins), for the Dolphin was the symbol of Poseidon, and is at once the most beautiful and most remarkable characteristic of the Greek seas.

As Aguieus (the god of the roads) he usurped the functions of Hermes, whom he probably ousted from many a corner of the country world by the greater fame of his oracle. For Hermes too was an oracular god, in spite of the legend, which, with obvious intent, represents Apollo as unable to endow Hermes with the mantic faculty.

One Apollo, then, is Eastern, the other "Hyperborean." This title, constantly applied to Apollo, signifies "Far-north Apollo," and the Hyperboreans were the people who dwelt in the far north.

Olen, the priest who first instituted the oracle of Apollo at Delphi, was a Hyperborean,[26] (though both Pausanias[27] and Herodotus[28] call him Lycian as well) and even when Apollo was settled in Delos, his faithful worshippers in the far north sent offerings to him in his new home,[29] passing

[26]Paus. x. 5. 8.
[27]Paus. viii. 21. 3.
[28]Herod. iv. 35.
[29]Herod. iv. 32. sqq.

them through the country of the Scythians, and thence from hand to hand till they reached the head of the Adriatic. From here, these mysterious offerings first touched Greek land at Dodona—the oldest sanctuary of Zeus in Greece, be it noted—and were handed on until they reached Delos. Pindar's reference to the Hyperboreans[30] is also plain, for he speaks of the expeditions of Herakles "in the land of Ister, among the Hyperborean folk, who serve Apollo," when he returned to bring trees to plant at Olympia. Here, the poet continues "Leto's horse-loving daughter, (Artemis), received him erst when he was come from the ridged hills and winding dells of Arcady, what time his father laid constraint upon him to . . . . fetch the golden-horned hind.[31] . . . . For in that chase he saw the land that lieth behind the blast of the cold North wind. There he halted and marvelled at the trees." All this passage is a plain reference to the great forests of the Danube basin, and the Central European trade route to the Baltic. The fusion of the Eastern and Northern forms of Apollo probably took place before he reached Greece proper. For it will be noted that a Lycian is called also a Hyperborean. There is nothing improbable in the meeting of Europe and Asia in a European region north of Greece, for ancient stories of travel held that it was possible to sail up the Danube and thence down to the Adriatic, as Jason was said to

[30]Pindar. Ol. iii.

[31]The *reindeer* is the only deer of which the hind has horns.

have done.[32] There was also a tradition of a great inland market at the intersection of the routes which ran from east to west and from north to south, where the wares of the Aegean, the Adriatic, and the Baltic were set out side by side. And these traditions are borne out by archæological research, which has substantiated the existence of "Mycenæan" trade routes on much the same lines as those indicated in the legends.[33] Thus the two Apollos may easily have become amalgamated before they reached Greece at all, and the name Hyperborean applied to both the Lycian and Northern sections of his worshippers. Apollo, therefore, is not only not indigenous to Greece, but is compounded of two foreign gods.

ARTEMIS. The name of Artemis is so bound up with that of her brother Apollo that her claims to Greek origin might be expected to stand or fall with those of the god. This is the case, so far as the name is concerned, but we shall find strong traces of very early Arcadian and Cretan forms of the goddess, which belong to much the same stratum of religion as did the Apollo Lykeios of Athens, and there is much in the worship of Artemis which is distinctly a survival from prehistoric times.

Artemis was a maiden-goddess, primarily the protectress of wild animals—this in the totem stage of civilization—later a goddess of the chase. By a natural paralell she was also the guardian of young

[32][Aristotle] de Miris Auscult. 104-5.
[33]Vide Ridgeway "Early Age of Greece" p. 366 sqq.

girls, and with her arrows, the counterpart of her brother's weapons, she had the power to deal sudden death. She presided over child birth, and women who died in child-bed were regarded as having been struck down by the arrows of Artemis. In Homer,[34] the Eilythyiae are regarded as separate from Artemis, giving relief to mothers, but to Artemis belongs the power to slay in child-birth.

In Asia Minor, notably in Ephesus, where she was symbolized by a black meteoric stone, she was regarded from very ancient times as almost a mother-goddess, the presiding deity of fertility, thus encroaching upon the functions of her Asiatic mother Kybele—(Gaia or Leto again.) In Greece, especially in Arcadia, she was worshipped conjointly with Demeter and Kore, but as inferior to them both, her statue standing as attendant upon that of Demeter and the "Mistress" at Lycosura.[35]

Thus in the earliest times we find her quite separate from Apollo, whose sister she becomes only with the story of the Delian birth of both from Leto. In Arcadia, where her many primitive forms mark her as having taken the place of as many local deities, she shows distinct traces of totemistic origin. As Artemis Eurynome,[36] at Phigaleia, she was worshipped in mermaid-form—a form reflected in Dictynna (the Goddess of Nets) which is indicative, not of Asiatic, but of indigenous Pelasgian origin,

[34] Il. xix. 119.
[35] Paus. viii. 37. 4.
[36] Paus. viii. 31. 4-6.

while her connection with the ancient dynasty of water-deities is emphasised by her titles of Limnatis (of the marshes) Potamia (of the rivers) and Alpheioneia (of the river Alpheus). As Akria and Koryphaia, she is a goddess of the mountain peaks. As Brauronia, she was worshipped at Brauron in Attica in bear-form.

At Athens, "bear-dances" were executed in her honour by little girls, and it was considered a precious privilege of high-born Athenian maidens to "play the bear" for Artemis, and to wear the saffron robe, which by the time of Aristophanes[37] (fifth century, B.C.) had taken the place of the bear-skin of an earlier age. The privilege was probably a less desirable one in the prehistoric worship, for the tradition of human sacrifice was clearly preserved in the ritual. For the victim in classical times was a goat, which was *called* a bear by the sacrificing priest; and in an earlier age it had been a real bear, *which the priest called his daughter.* Civilized Greece shrank from admitting the indigenous origin of such a sacrifice, and sought to show that the goddess who had demanded a human victim was a Thracian deity.

But the real source of the ritual is to be found in the struggle between Artemis and an older Arcadian deity of the same functions, Callisto, who was said to have been turned into a bear by Artemis. But the connection between Arkos (= a bear) and Arcadia is too obvious to be overlooked, and it is practically certain that we have here the remnants of the Arcad-

[37] Aristoph. Lysistrata. 641-644.

ian totemistic goddess, the bear whom it would be the first thought of the shepherd to propitiate. That the worship of a goddess akin to Artemis was prevalant in Thracian Taurus is certain, and the element of human sacrifice in the Greek worship of the goddess was regarded as originating in Thrace, and explained by the story of Iphigenia, who, rather than fulfill her duty of sacrificing strangers to the goddess, carried off the sacred image and fled to Attica. But human sacrifice to maiden goddesses in many localities was prevalent in primæval Greece, and it is probable that the Artemis Tauropolos, the Taurian Artemis, merely appropriated the powers of those goddesses whose functions, and the form of whose worship, most nearly approximated to her own.

We saw, in the consideration of Apollo, that Artemis was regarded as belonging to the Hyperboreans, for she welcomed Herakles to the "shadowy sources of Ister." In the "Hyperborean" system, she is the female counterpart of her brother. In Thrace she is the fierce goddess to whom strangers are sacrificed, and seems to partake of the nature of the wild beasts over whom she presides. In Asia Minor, she is the goddess of fertility, and also the ruler of wild animals, while in Arcadia she is first a very primitive beast-totem, then a goddess of wild beasts, of lakes, streams and mountains, a compound of all the local fairies of the rugged land. Out of all these elements her historic worship was compounded, so that while many aspects of her are indigenous and Pelasgian,

we must rather regard her final and "official" personality as foreign, and make her a true sister both to Hyperborean and Lycian Apollo.

ATHENA. Athena, as her name implies, is intimately connected with Athens, and the plural form of the city's name probably indicates that it derived its title from the goddess herself. She is the goddess of wisdom, and of the arts of war and peace. A maiden goddess, she is by no means the special protector of young women, for her functions are almost universal in their scope. Yet there is scarcely any trace of a physical element in her nature, for she is essentially a goddess of *doing*, not of mere *being*. In Homer's time she was second only to Zeus in power, although Athens was a comparatively obscure city, and her cult was predominant in every city of Greece. In Sparta she had her "brazen house" a reminiscence of the bronze-plated walls of the palaces of the Mycenaean period, pre-Dorian in date. In Messenia and Megara alike, her cult is of the most primitive, while as Athena Alea at Tegea, she is connected with the great Poseidonian pedigree of Arcadia.[38] In Lemnos and Samos her worship is primæval, while Crete claimed her as native born, and Rhodes stood only second to Athens in her favour. At Athens she had her dwelling "in the well-built house" of Erechtheus, the Pelasgian king of Athens. Yet the strange story which makes her the daughter of Zeus, born fully armed from the

[38]Paus. viii. Ch. 1-5. See pedigree on page 68.

head of the god, and set free by a blow from the axe of Hephaistos, places her by force in the family of the usurper. The savage tale tells that Zeus swallowed her mother Metis (wisdom) to prevent the birth of a child who should be his rival—practically a repetition of the tale about the birth of Zeus himself.

If Athena was Zeus-born, she was not indigenous in Greece, for Zeus himself was foreign. But an epithet of Athena—Tritogeneia—tells a different tale. This word was translated by the Grammarians as head-born, "Trito," the meaning of which was lost, being said to be a Bœotian word for a head. But the word is found in Triton, Amphitrite, and Tritonis, and in every case is connected with water. The Cretan story was that Athena was born from Zeus in Crete, by the sources of a river Triton. But at Alalcomenae in Bœotia, whence Athena took one of her greatest titles, was a river Triton, and rivers of the same name occur in Thessaly and Libya, in each connected with Athena. At Pheneos in Arcadia, hard by Lake Pheneos, Athena Tritonia was worshipped together with Poseidon Hippios. Also Athena bears the titles Hippia[39] (of horses) at Olympia, and Chalinitis[40] (of the bridle) at Corinth, where she gave to Bellerophon the bridle with which he mastered the horse Pegasos, and so is a goddess of horsemanship, as Poseidon is its god. In the Megarid, a sea-gull was her symbol, and at other maritime places a crab is figured on her helmet.

[39]Paus. v. 15. 6.
[40]Paus. ii. 4. 1.

"Triton" may therefore have been a river name signifying simply "water," like our own river name "Avon."

Now all this does not prove that Athena was a water-goddess, but it does prove that her birth-story was in some way connected with the sea or the streams. If this was so, then the story of her birth from the head of Zeus is a fiction, designed to affiliate an already powerful goddess to the ruler of a new dynasty of gods. She was too well established to be re-born as an infant, and therefore the miraculous story of her birth full grown and fully-armed was invented to please all sides.

Further, though Athena was connected with Athens, it is by no means necessary that her origin should belong especially to Attica, for the probability is that the city having taken her as it patroness, took its name from the goddess. Thus she was there before the beginning of Athens, and with her is associated, not Poseidon, but Hephaistos. Hephaistos, like Athena, is especially concerned with the arts, and it was he and Athena together who fashioned Pandora, the first woman,[41] while in a strictly parallel case, Prometheus, another form of the fire god, and in a great degree partaking of the nature of Athena herself, is also associated with Athena, for it was she who put life into the men

[41]Hesiod. Works and Days. 59-82. See also "Mythology and Monuments of Ancient Athens" (Harrison and Verrall) p. 449 sqq. The birth of Pandora was represented on the base of the great statue of Athena Parthenos (the maiden), by Pheidias, in the Parthenon.

of clay made by Prometheus. And Erichthonios, the half-snake chthonian hero of Athens, was the son of Hephaistos and Gaia.[42] Athena had repulsed the advances of the fire-god, but brought up the child, and thus became in a sense the mother of the Athenian dynasty. This form of the story was probably substituted for an earlier actual motherhood, in order to carry out the growing idea of a maiden-goddess.

Not only the arts of peace, but also those of war were included in the realm of Athena, and indeed the helmet, spear, shield, and aegis were her regular attributes. Attired in such warlike garb, she was represented alike as Pallas, the old Trojan form, Polias, the goddess of the city state, Promachos, leader in battle, and Parthenos, the virgin. Yet here again her character remains consistent, for she represents, not the mad lust of blood, but wise counsel in war, courage and skill combined. With her, slaying was but a means to an end, and of that end, Victory, she was also the personification. Of her weapons, the helm, spear and shield are intelligible at once, but the aegis is a thing mysterious. Represented in art as a kind of breast-plate fringed with snakes, or adorned with the Gorgon's head, it is described in literature as a mysterious object, the shaking of which by the goddess—or by Zeus, or Apollo, who also wielded it—as filling the hearts of men with fear, while etymologically, it is but a goat-skin! Guesses as to its nature include the storm-cloud, the lightning and the hail. But

[42]Paus. i. 2. 5.

none of these are capable of a protective power such as was also ascribed to the attribute of Athena. The easiest explanation lies in its name. It was simply a goat-skin. It is a commonplace that witchcraft plays an important part in savage warfare. Every native rebellion in South Africa affords daily examples of the "doctoring" of troops to make them invulnerable, and in all of these ceremonies the shaking or waving of skins is prominent, while the same magic spell of goat-skin, horse-tail, or what not, may be employed with equal effect, to shake the courage of the enemy. The aegis of Athena, adorned with metal scales and tassels, was a magic war-charm, and as such, was the symbol at once of protection to her followers, and confusion to her enemies. It is a remnant of the very primitive days of her worship.

Athena, then, stands in a unique position among the goddesses. She is a distinct personality, the strongest perhaps of the whole pantheon. Represented in the Homeric and Hesiodic legends as born of Zeus, she is obviously of far older origin, and would seem to owe her birth to water, her original father being most probably Poseidon. Although water-born, she seems to have exercised no special jurisdiction over sea or stream, though her aid might be invoked under all circumstances by her votaries. The story of her contest with Poseidon for the land of Attica suggests that her worship had grown from small importance to a paramount position in Athens itself, while the gift with which she won the contest—the olive—implies that her

worship was at least as old as the cultivation of that tree, the staple of Attica. Her epithet "glaukopis" means quite as probably "owl-faced" as "grey-eyed," and the bird which was her symbol upon the coins of Athens was possibly chosen on the strength of his wise appearance to represent the goddess of wisdom. On the other hand, the owls that flitted among the olive groves of Athens may well have been regarded as the spirit of the trees, and thus the goddess who taught men the art of olive-culture would be well represented by the wiseacre bird, which had probably been a local totem even before Athena came upon the scene.

Out of all this tangle of possibilities it remains to extract the kernal of fact. Athena, the water-born goddess, who gave to men the art of cultivation, and taught them horsemanship, as Poseidon gave them the horse—who is associated, almost as by marriage, with Hephaistos the master craftsman—whose especial department, in fact, lies in *skill* of all kinds, in every possible art from war to weaving, is nothing more or less than the spirit of civilization. Water-born, because the race who evolved her had its first gatherings beside the streams upon which life depended—connected with Poseidon, because, as has been seen, that god was the first to rule both land and sea, and because upon him, the controller of earthquake and tide, depended the existence of those same streams—associated with Hephaistos, because without skill to make fire, man cannot advance one step beyond the beasts, and because the bridge which spans the

gulf between an age of stone and one of metal is a bridge of fire—a goddess of war, because civilization and the formation of communities bring with them, inevitably, conflict between one community and another—embracing in her advance the owl-totem, the gull-totem and all the strange embodiments given by man to the spirit of the rocks, the trees and the rivers, which only the art of civilization taught him to turn to his own use—the goddess of Health (Hygieia) because sickness and wounds are older than civilization, one of the first tasks of which is to remedy such ills—Athena Tritogeneia easily holds first place among the gods of Greece for the universality of her worship and the strength of her personality. It was but natural that she should reach the height of her glory in the city which owed its whole history to a consistent self-dedication to the claims of civilization and art, and which had maintained an uninterrupted strain of race from the beginning to the very end : and it was at Athens that Athena was raised by a passionate patriotism to the level of a goddess superhuman, unapproachable, in all but a tender and intimate sympathy for mankind. Fear, it is true, was rendered to her as the due of a goddess who held infinite power, and self-interest as a consequence prompted the proper observance of her festivals. But these were almost set aside by a sympathy that gave and got understanding, a willingness of sacrifice to one so bountiful, and a service to the goddess of that freedom which constituted the very life of a free state, in which the discipline

of her worship lay at the bottom of all law. Nay, even more, the pride of the Athenian in his tutelary goddess was at once so personal and so national, that in his whole-hearted adoration lay the seeds of that seventh element of love which completes all worship. Athena was the first and last word of religion as it appealed to the intellectual Athenian, for in her was all divinity save identity with man. It was only because the intellect was her final court of appeal that she fell short of actual divinity.

Athena, then, is incontestably of the old indigenous stock, ranking in general acceptance second to none, and in antiquity only below Poseidon.

Hephaistos. That Hephaistos belongs to the indigenous stratum of gods has already been indicated by the creation-stories in which he was associated with Athena in her pre-virginal state. He was primarily the god of fire, an element naturally worshipped by the inhabitants of volcanic districts, such as Lemnos, upon which island he is said to have fallen when cast out of heaven by Hera. In this story is a reference to the lightning, but it is rather of fire as the quickening spark of civilization than as the untamed force, that he is the presiding deity. He is the god of all craftsmen, especially of workers in metal, and to him was entrusted the forging of the thunderbolts of Zeus. Here is a distinct intimation that Hephaistos preceded Zeus in Hellas, for a god is not originally evolved to be the servant of another, and Hephaistos is inseparable from fire. Of his

lameness it is hard to speak with certainty, but the story in which Hera is made his mother, and in which she casts him out of heaven on account of his ugliness, is most probably a legend intended to bring the old god into discredit, and the invention of a race which held all handicraftsmen in some contempt. Hephaistos, then, belongs to the older stratum of the gods, and may be especially associated with Athena, as the patron of skill. His connection with Aphrodite can only date from her introduction into Greece, and by that connection he is deliberately placed side by side with the goddess who, next to Ares, her paramour, was held in the smallest esteem in Olympus. In fact, Hephaistos, in Homer, is the victim of a deliberate conspiracy to belittle his importance.

Dionysos. Space forbids a close inquiry into the history of the "wine-god." Enough has been said already to show that his origin has much in common with that of the most primitive nature-gods, such as Kronos. He was introduced into Greece by way of Thrace and Thebes, and was represented as the son of Zeus and Semele, a mortal woman. His mother dying before his birth, he was sewn into the thigh of Zeus, and so, like Athena, was Zeus-born. The same reason may be given for this story, namely, that the adoption was a violent one, in order to give Dionysos a definite status among the gods. The orgiastic nature of his worship points to an Eastern origin, which indeed is beyond doubt. But it is also certain that he had been settled in

Crete many centuries before his introduction by way of northern Greece. The main difference between the Cretan and Thracian aspects of Dionysos is that whereas in the south he is first and foremost the vegetation-god, and so the god of the lower world, symbolized by the horse and bull, and early confused with Zeus, in the north he is more especially the god of strong drink. This is easily explained by the fact that northern races are more prone to drunkenness than those which inhabit warmer climates, and the worship of the nature-spirit differed accordingly in the two latitudes. Thus, while Dionysos speedily lost his personality in the south, becoming merged in other chthonic vegetation-gods of his own kind, in the north his association with the vine was seized upon and made the predominant feature of his worship, with the result that his original character was obscured, and the nature-god of Crete became the patron of the national vice of Thrace and Bœotia. It was only in the mysteries that he retained his true significance, and even here there is a distinct line to be drawn between the northern and southern interpretations of the god.

Dionysos is therefore an old god, but of comparatively new adoption in historic Greece.

Aphrodite. Aphrodite is avowedly Asiatic, although she is described as the daughter of Zeus and Dione, and the ancestor of the Cadmeian race of Thebes. Dione, by the time of Homer, had become sufficiently shadowy to be made the mother

even of a foreign deity of so doubtful a character as Aphrodite, while the story of Cadmus bears on the face of it the stamp of a Phœnician settlement at Thebes. Her first Greek home was Paphos in Cyprus, whither she came, according to Herodotus, from Askalon[43] and whence her worship was carried to Kythera, a little island of the south of Greece. In Crete she was identified in very early times with the local name of Pasiphae, while Europa and Ariadne are not entirely free from confusion with the Eastern goddess. In Athens, the origin of the worship of Aphrodite was connected with one Porphyrion (the purple-man), a distinct reference to the Phœnician trade of purple-dye.

Her two chief titles in Greece were Ourania (heavenly) and Pandemos (of the people), but it is not to be supposed that these titles imply any distinction between a higher and a lower form of her worship. Indeed "heavenly" is here probably no more than a general title implying her admission to Olympus.

In Asia, under many names and in many places, she was at once a nature-goddess and the deity of human procreation. As such she was sometimes represented as bearded. She was also a Semitic war-goddess, a fact which led to her connection in Olympus with Ares, the bloody war-god of Thrace. In her worship were many traces of the cruelty of the East, while in her dealings with men she was ever revengeful, petty and capricious. This strange aspect of a goddess of human love between

[43]Herod. i. 105.

man and woman was doubtless largely due to the low estimation in which that sentiment was held by the Greeks of all ages, and the small part played by the wives and mothers of Greece in the life of the men. At Sparta, however, where the women had greater freedom than in any other state of historic Greece, her worship as Aphrodite Pasiphae was perhaps more Oriental than anywhere else, save in Corinth, where she found her headquarters. As the idea of love was not associated by the Greek with marriage, Aphrodite became of necessity the patroness of a class of women bound by no such law, and her worship was of a correspondingly degraded kind. Thus, as in the case of Dionysos, the Eastern deity tended to become specialized through her adoption by a race to whom one of her functions was new, and therefore more noteworthy than those which were already appropriated by native gods.

Ares. Lastly, Ares, the god of war, is a deity too obviously foreign to need much comment. In Homer, he is a cowardly boaster, a lustful bully, held in small esteem by the gods, and no match for human heroes in battle. He is of Thracian origin, and never received much veneration in Greece either in Homeric or later times. His cruelty, and his connection with war, made him the natural consort of the goddess, also foreign, whose native province had included war, and whose cruelty was her racial heritage. There are no traces of his early worship among the Greeks, to whom

indeed murder and bloodshed were not congenial, and the Areiopagos—"Mars' Hill,"—at Athens, was almost certainly not the hill of Ares at all, but the hill of *curses*. The court of the Areiopagus tried cases of bloodshed, it is true, but the place of the trials took its name, not from the god of crime (whom an ætiological legend asserted to have been tried for murder on that very hill)[44] but from the Furies who punished it. Ares is therefore so foreign as to be a negligible quantity in the Greek pantheon.

We have been led to decide that the following gods are indigenous and aboriginal—Kronos, Demeter, Kore or Persephone, and Hades or Aidoneus, in the primitive nature-worship: Poseidon and Hera, Hephaistos and Athena, Hermes and local forms of Artemis (Callisto, Britomartis, Aphaea or Dictynna) among the more developed objects of worship.

Of the non-indigenous gods (who nevertheless were largely aboriginal in function, and of course indigenous somewhere) Zeus and Dione, Hyperborean Apollo and Artemis, form a complete family, of northern origin. Dionysos is a Phrygian nature god, and Lycian Apollo and Asiatic Artemis are also importations from the east, these three being in closer racial relation to the indigenous Greek gods than the northern group. Aphrodite and Ares are later importations, the former Semitic and the latter Thracian in origin.

[44] Paus. i. 21. 4.

The Greek and the northern classes of gods are further differentiated by their general aspect, to such an extent as to indicate different racial origin, though by the time of Homer they have become welded into one system. The indigenous gods are extremely *practical*, and preside over the every day *facts* of existence, the ordinary occupations of every day life. The northern group are characterised by a distinctly supernatural atmosphere, and concern themselves more largely with moral law, while almost the only law touched by the earlier dynasty was that of marriage. The most highly developed form of the oracle also belongs to a god of the northern group, Apollo, whose Delphian fame was the chief means of the spread of his worship throughout Greece, far surpassing that of his predecessors Poseidon and Gaia.

It would seem therefore that the northern group of gods must belong to a race whose religious system was based upon an outlook different from, and in many respects, more advanced than, that of the aboriginal Greek. But these gods, and consequently their worshippers, were predominant in Homeric times, so that the supersession of the older people and their gods must have taken place at an earlier date than that of the siege of Troy.

The proposition with which we are faced amounts to this. The Homeric rulers of Greece placed above the gods who have been shown to be indigenous, gods who have been shown to be foreign. Therefore it seems likely that the Homeric kings were not aboriginal Greeks. A brief examination of

their pedigrees must here suffice, and will be found to support the proposition.

Agammemnon and Menelaos were the descendants in the second or third generation of Pelops. Pelops, son of Tantalos, was a Lydian, who "came with wealth as a leader of poor men,"[45] and who married Hippodamia, daughter of Oenomaus, the native king of Pisa, and deposed his wife's father. Agammemnon and Menelaos married Helen and Clytaimnestra, and *thus* became kings of Mycenae and Sparta, which were the inheritance of their wives from their father Tyndareus. Tyndareus on the other hand was descended from Perseus, who in his turn was descended from Poseidon and the "first man" of Argos, Phoroneus, who was the son of the river Inachos—an indigenous water-born deity.

Thus Agammemnon and Menelaos were foreigners by descent, who only obtained their kingdom by marriage with native princesses.

Odysseus says that his father Laertes won his inheritance for him with the spear, and Laertes himself speaks of taking castles when he was young.[46] Moreover, Odysseus was, according to one story, but fourth in descent from Zeus.

On the other hand, Agapenor,[47] who led the Arcadian contingent to the siege of Troy, was of pure Pelasgian descent from Pelasgos himself,

[45]Thuc. i. 9. 2.
[46]Od. xxiv. 376.
[47]Il. ii. 610.
[48]Paus. viii. 4. 10.

through Ankaios,[48] and Zeus does not appear in the pedigree at all.

Telamonian Ajax and Achilles were both descended from a common ancestor Aeacus, who was the son of Zeus by Aegina. But Aegina was the grand-daughter of Poseidon, who thus comes higher up in the stem than Zeus. Moreover, the introduction of the worship of Zeus into Aegina is inextricably bound up with the name of Aeacus. It would thus appear that we have in this story a legend of the beginning of a new order of things, in which the marriage of a foreign man with a native woman plays a part.

The most striking commentary upon our classification of the gods, however, lies in the fact that the founders of all the oldest cities in Greece are descended, not from Zeus or Dione, Apollo or Artemis, but from Poseidon, Gaia (the earth), or Hephaistos. Cases in point are Lycaon, grandson of Gaia and founder of Lycosura, Phoroneus grandsons of Poseidon, and founder of Phoronicum (these are the two "first cities" of Greece), and Erechtheus, the hero of Athens, son of Hephaistos and Gaia, and all but identified in worship with Poseidon; while descendants of Phoroneus founded almost all the great Pelasgian cities of Argos, which, as we have seen, became eventually the marriage portion of Agammemnon and Menelaos. Lastly Perseus, who is descended from Poseidon as well as from Inachos, founded Mycenae, which represented the zenith of pre-Homeric civilization on the mainland.

Thus it would appear that about four generations before the Trojan war, the Achaeans, a new dynasty with new gods, obtained possession, in some cases peacefully, and in others by force, of the strongholds of the ancient Poseidon-worshipping race. If it be considered further, that the only great Homeric sanctuary of Zeus was at Dodona in the far north, and that Apollo bore the name Hyperborean, while Dione simply faded away before the lustre of the native Hera, we may form the opinion that the Achaean race only reached Greece and brought their gods with them from the north, from "the shadowy sources of Ister," little more than a century before the Trojan war—that is to say, between 1,250 and 1,200 B.C.

According to the Homeric poems, the gods are divided into factions concerning the Trojan war. Zeus is neutral, as befits the ruler of gods and men. The gods upon the Greek side are Poseidon, Hera, Athena, Hephaistos, and Hermes. Those on the Trojan side are Apollo, Artemis, Leto, Ares and Aphrodite.

The Pelasgian deities, therefore are for the Greeks, and the Asiatic for the Trojans. For Leto is closely akin to Kybele, the Asiatic mother-goddess, and the Apollo and Artemis, here fighting for Troy, have both been shown to have an Asiatic origin. If it should appear strange that the gods of the indigenous Greek, who was racially akin to the Trojan, should be fighting for a race not indigenous to Greece, we must remember that the war was not between the "Hyperborean" and

" Pelasgian " Greeks of the mainland, but between the European and Asiatic sections of the Aegean population, and that therefore the line of cleavage falls naturally between the Eastern and Western rather than between the Northern and Southern groups of the gods : and it has already been indicated that the conquest of the Pelasgian by the Achaean race was effected by a peaceful fusion of the two races. The result of this was the similar fusion of the old and new religions : for as intermarriage played an important part in the settlement of the Achæans in Greece, by the time of Homer the new comers were almost as much Pelasgian as Achæan in descent. The upbringing of the children being in the hands of Pelasgian mothers, the first gods whom the child learned to venerate were Pelasgian, and they were ever his home-gods, while his father's gods, with whom he came more closely into contact as he approached manhood, represented to him the public and " official " aspect of life and worship. Thus was formed the " double family " of gods the existence of which, it was the object of this chapter to explain.

CHAPTER IV

HERO WORSHIP

It has been made abundantly plain in the foregoing chapters that all anthropomorphic gods are not, as has been supposed, human beings deified. The human form of the earlier gods was not essential and was by no means the rule. It is easy to see, however, that once the gods had definitely assumed human form, their circle was opened to additions from the ranks of the human race. For if the gods are men of superhuman power, then men of superhuman power are gods.

In every man is the desire to know—to discover. In the dawn of the world such discovery was a necessity. And the man who first wrested one or other of her secrets from nature, when all nature was a secret, was raised above his fellows, as being one step nearer to the gods than they. Such a man, judged by the standard of his fellows, *is* superhuman and his power is miraculous. Nay, it is even possible that the idea of the anthropomorphic god originated in the admiration of some such "first man." Powers, strangely and fancifully figured, there had been before, but here was a god in the very form of man, with power to control and

use the forces of a hitherto inscrutable Nature. And by this tendency to worship a god-like man we may often explain that puzzling phenomenon, the grave of the god, which figures so frequently in Greek religion. Prometheus, who brought living fire down from heaven in a reed, is but the man who first made fire the servant of mankind—the greatest inventor of all ages.[1] His very name may signify the "Thinker,"[2] the inventor—and his name is immortal. But fire was still untamed, and might break its bonds at any time, and so Prometheus is reckoned not quite a god, but a thief who stole the power from the gods, a thief to whom mankind must perforce be grateful for his theft. And so in course of time his punishment was put aside and he became a god.

In Greek worship there are many heroes, men in the circumstances of their birth and death, superhuman according to the standard of their day, made gods in later days when their deeds loomed larger through the mists of time. Of these we shall consider but two—Heracles and Asklepios—for in their story the whole process of the making of a god from a mortal man is unfolded.

It has too long been the fashion to speak of Heracles as a mythical personage, the symbol of a hundred and one natural phenomena, "the Tyrian Melkarth, god of the sun." It is true that stories are attached to his name which can but bear

[1] Æsch. Prometheus Vinctus. 436-506. This magnificent speech of Prometheus on the dawn of civilization is in itself the key to all hero-worship.

[2] Æsch. loc. cit. last line.

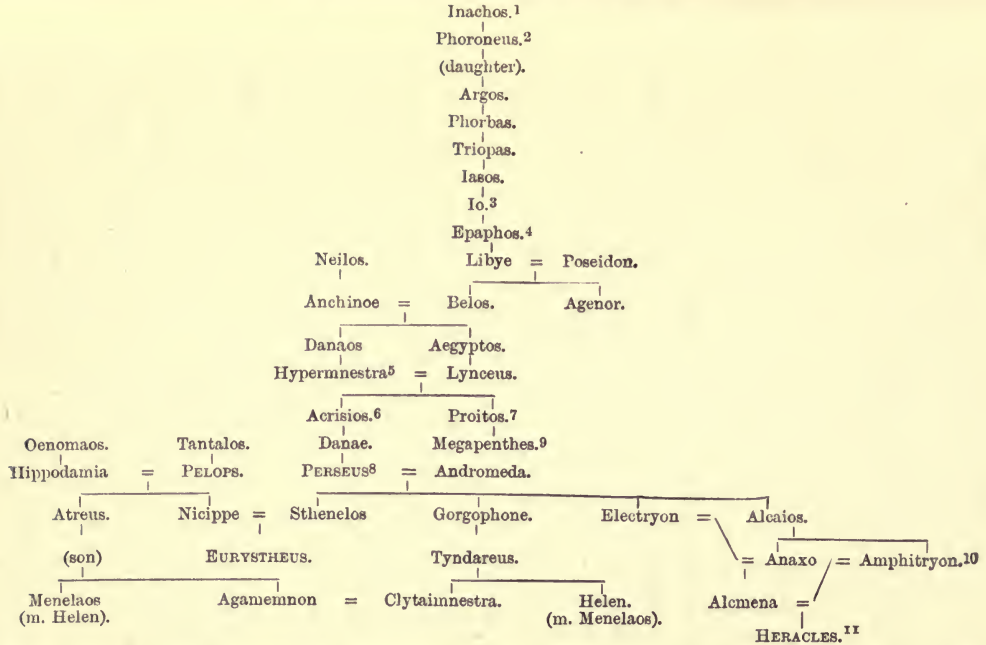
a physical interpretation, and that the fancy of the myth-maker has done much to confuse his personality with that of the Phœnician god. But Heracles, be it stated at the outset, is no myth, but an actual historical personage of known ancestry and certain date, and in his history is written the history of his times. How well he earned his eventual divinity, of which there is no trace in his earthly life, we may shortly see.

The annexed pedigree (p. 68) will show clearly who he was and when he lived.

Heracles was born just after Eurystheus, and was made, by the spite of Hera, the servant of that shrewd but contemptible individual, at whose behest he accomplished his famous labours.[3] From this pedigree it is obvious that Heracles is of purely Pelasgian descent. If any doubt be entertained as to the propriety of making him the contemporary of Eurystheus, his persecutor, it should be noted that both his mother and grandmother married their uncles, which places Heracles a full generation further back than would appear from the pedigree, while if Sthenelos was considerably younger than Alcaios and Electryon, as he might well be in so large a family as that of Perseus, Eurystheus would be brought down accordingly, to meet Heracles, and to be born but a day before him, as the story tells. Thus the *floruit* of Heracles, a short generation before the Trojan war, fits in perfectly with the story of his expedition against Troy in the time of Laomedon, father of the Priam

[3] Il. xix. 97.

PEDIGREE OF HERACLES.



[1] A river-god. [2] Founded the first city in Argolis. [3] Metamorphosed into a cow. She was closely connected with cow-Hera. [4] Born in Egypt. Identified with the Egyptian Apis by Herodotus. [5] "Splendide mendax." The only one of the daughters of Danaos who did not murder her husband. [6] King of Argos, accidentally killed by Perseus. [7] Founder of Tiryns. [8] Founder of Mycenae. [9] Exchanged kingdoms with Perseus after death of Acrisios, taking Argos in exchange for Tiryns. [10] Zeus was said to have assumed the form of Amphitryon in order to become the father of Heracles. On the face of it, this is a legend invented to give Heracles a definite status in Olympus when he became a god, and Amphitryon was doubtless the real father of Heracles. Thus Zeus does not appear in the pedigree of Heracles. [11] Pausanias calls Heracles the great-grandson of Pelops. As the above pedigree shows, this is merely a loose reference to the marriage of the great-uncle of Heracles to the daughter of Pelops.

who was king of Troy in the time of Agammemnon.

Next, let it be noted that whereas Heracles was a pure Perseid on both sides of the house, Eurystheus is half Perseid and half Pelopid. Thus, the vigour and adventurous spirit of the native Pelasgian is put to the use of a ruler of mixed race—a plain historical statement of the growing power of the foreigner in Greece.

Eurystheus is represented as mortally afraid of Heracles, though able to command him. Such is precisely the relation between ruler and ruled in the early days of a half-alien dynasty. Heracles, the popular hero and born leader of the people, may well have been a thorn in the side of the mongrel king, whose only safety lay in keeping his rival busy with expeditions in far countries.

Now, as to the actual exploits of Heracles; are they capable of an explanation compatible with the actual human existence of the man? Or are they all mere naturalistic myths attached to the name of a popular hero?

The "twelve labours" of Heracles[4] are as a matter of fact nearer forty in number, but they fall naturally into a few groups. Of these one group represents feats of strength and the skill of the hunter, as the slaying of the Nemean lion and the Stymphalian birds, the capture of the Erymanthian boar and the Cretan bull, and of Kerberos, the hound of hell.

Another group includes the capture of the golden horned hind, and of the cattle of Geryon, and the

[4]Paus. v. 10. 9.; 26. 7.; ix. 11. 6.

punishment of Diomede and the capture of his mares. The quest of the golden apples of the Hesperides also comes under this heading, while closely akin to it are the destruction of Troy and the conquest of the Amazons and Centaurs. Another group includes the cleansing of the Augean stable and the slaying of the Hydra. Another class of labours, less miraculous but not less significant, is that which includes the introduction of the white poplar, and the elimination of thistles, at Olympia. His contest with Apollo at Delphi[5] and his invasion of Elis are also of importance, and there is a deep historical meaning in the stories of the institution by him of the Olympian games,[6] of the worship of Asklepios,[7] and of the subsequent history of his descendants the Heraclidae.

It is impossible to overlook the *practically useful* nature of the feats of Heracles, and in this prevailing characteristic lies the key of the problem.

It is scarcely necessary to state that a series of labours whose field extends from Themiscyra to the Atlantic and from the Danube to Morocco can hardly have been the work of one man. But they may have been the work of the great men of one generation in a period of vigorous progress, and the predominant personality of Heracles must have absorbed that of many smaller heroes.

In the hunting group of labours, there is no

[5]Paus. iii. 21. 8.
[6]Paus. v. 7. 7. viii. 48. 1.
[7]Paus. iii. 19. 7.

feature of incredibility. The art of the Mycenaean age testifies to the existence of lions and lion-hunting in Greece, and there is every proof that Heracles was a contemporary of the artists of Mycenae. The capture of the Erymanthian boar is equally easy of belief, though possibly the fact that it was captured alive may contain some reference to the first taming of swine—a possibility which, as we shall see, becomes almost a certainty in the light of the other deeds of Heracles. The story of Cerberus we may dismiss as a later addition, deliberately designed to give to the hero a supernatural air, in view of his elevation to Olympus.

Heracles then was a mighty hunter. Every nation—nay, every village—has its own mighty hunter, who clears the country of obnoxious beasts, and to Heracles has been assigned the credit for the deeds of many local hunters. (Many a joke that he never made is now the exclusive property of Sydney Smith !)

The second group has a wider significance. The common characteristics of all these feats are, the *travel* entailed, and the *bringing back* of something from the expedition. From the Danube comes the golden-horned hind, from Cadiz, the home of Geryon, a breed of cattle, and from Thrace a breed of mares, while a golden fruit is the trophy of the westernmost expedition. In close connection with this last, are the bringing of the poplar from the Achelous to Olympia,[8] and the destruction of

[8]Paus. v. 14. 2.

thistles at Olympia,[9] while it will occur to us that according to Pindar,[10] Heracls visited the sources of the Danube to *bring back trees* for the Olympian sanctuary.

It has already been pointed out (p. 42) that the reindeer hind is horned, and therefore the phenomenon of a horned hind is not the impossibility that it was deemed by ancient commentators upon this story. Moreover from Pindar we learn that Heracles travelled to the sources of Ister to bring the strange animal back with him, and it is also known that reindeer existed so far south as Switzerland in the lake-dwelling period of central Europe. Thus the whole story is a perfectly rational account of a "scientific expedition," and the travels of Heracles are the prehistoric prototype of the voyage of the "Challenger."

The reindeer never became acclimatized in Greece. But the other two stories of a similar nature exhibit Heracles not merely as the scientific, but as the practical collector. The cattle of the Geryones, the monstrous triple giant of Cadiz, were brought back to Greece by Heracles, and the grain of truth in the story is strikingly demonstrated by archæological research. For whereas there is but one type of cattle represented in Mycenaean art—the indigenous type, with long lyre-shaped horns—Homer, speaking of an epoch one generation from Heracles, mentions both curved and straight horned cattle, from which it would seem that a new breed

[9]Paus. vi. 23. 1.
[10]Pindar. Ol. iii.

of cattle had been but recently introduced into Greece.

The raiding of the mares of Diomede that fed on human flesh, is just such another story. Thrace was famous for its horses, as Libya had been before. At Olympia stood statues both of Horse Poseidon and Horse Ares. Mares could but be needed for breeding purposes, and in the exploit of Heracles we see a perfectly reasonable story of the introduction from Thrace of a new breed of horses. The accompaniment in each of these cases, of a battle for the animals, would seem to indicate that the methods of collecting adopted in such early days were violent rather than commercial. Thus Heracles is also the forerunner of scientific stock-breeders, and his fame rests in these stories upon the improvement by him of the native Pelasgian breeds of horses and cattle.

If this explanation be adopted, the interest displayed by Heracles in arboriculture is not surprising, and the quest of the golden fruit of the Hesperides becomes no more mysterious than the importation of the white poplar from Epirus. What the golden fruit may have been is not a matter of great importance, though it is interesting to note that in modern Greek oranges are called Portogália, from Portugal, so that now, as in the days of Heracles, the golden fruit has an avowedly Western origin. It is possible that the story is, like that of the golden hind, the figure of an unsuccessful attempt at the acclimatization in Greece, of foreign products.

If we can find traces of communication in pre-

historic times between Greece and the Danube, Spain and southern Russia, we may feel confident that these labours of Heracles were actually performed about the time at which the pedigree shows Heracles to have existed. It has been shown that the great trade route to the North from Greece passes up through Epirus, past "the shadowy sources of Ister," to the Baltic. The amber found in the Mycenaean tombs is all Baltic amber. Thus probability is added to the story of the golden hind. There are abundant traces of communication with Mycenaean culture in southern Spain (Baetica), and it seem probable that the route to Spain was by way of Trieste, through the passes of the Alps to Marseilles, and so down the Eastern coast of Spain. Thus the travels of Heracles to Cadiz are not without their archæological confirmation. In the Crimea are "Mycenaean" tombs of the latest type (*i.e.* contemporary with Heracles), and the route to the Crimea lay through Thrace, as also did the land-way to the Pelasgian-inhabited Troad. Therefore the breed of "Mycenaean" horses may well have been improved by a Thracian strain.

So far then everything in the story of Heracles shows him in the light of an extremely practical benefactor of his race—precisely the sort of character to become a popular hero.

The Centaurs and Amazons are types of the wild tribes whom this old-time explorer met upon his way, and through whose hostile country he had to pass. It is scarcely necessary here to enter into speculations as to the origin of the semi-equine

form of the Centaurs. At least we can congratulate ourselves that the traveller's tales of Heracles are on the whole more credible than those of Sir John Mandeville! Perhaps, if we could but find it, there is a rational explanation of every detail of such stories.

The next class of exploits, of which the destruction of the Hydra and the cleansing of the Augean stable are examples, reveals a still more remarkable aspect of pre-Homeric civilization. Heracles was at first baffled by the seven-headed monster of the Lernaean marsh, for every head destroyed was replaced by two, each as pestilential as that which they succeeded. But eventually, by searing with fire the wounds he inflicted, he was able to stop this multiplication, and destroy the beast. At first sight this story is hard to rationalize. But if we look upon the marsh-dragon with deadly breath, as a fever-breathing swamp, we are on the way to an explanation. For then we may say that Heracles first drained the swamp, only to find that its rank water-vegetation, dead and rotting in the sun, bred pestilence twice as freely as before, until, by burning it, he removed the source of danger once and for all. This explanation is perhaps incomplete, for it does not account for the part of the story which tells that Heracles poisoned his arrows with the gall of the Hydra—a poison through which he himself eventually met his end. But if we suppose that the marsh was infested with poisonous water-snakes, which, by his feat of engineering, he drove from their habitat and exter-

minated, we have the story rationalized in every detail. In connection with this legend, it is interesting to recall the fate, in historical times, of the Ionian city of Myus, which, in the time of Pausanias[11] was totally deserted, the citizens having been driven away by the swarms of poisonous gnats which inhabited a swamp created by the silting of the mud from the river Maiander into an arm of the sea. From this it is plain that Heracles, by draining a marsh, was likely to earn the unbounded gratitude and admiration of those who lived near it.

The cleansing of the "stable" of Augeas is a story of the same kind, and renders the above explanation more probable still. For the land of King Augeas, in Elis, was befouled by an immense accumulation of cattle-dung, which rendered the growth of crops impossible. But Heracles cleared away the filth by turning the stream of the river Menius over the contaminated land.[12] This story contains an allusion to a stage of transition from a pastoral to an agricultural age. But the feat is one of pure engineering, and is one of several similar exploits which are placed to the credit of Heracles. Other rivers whose course he diverted are the Cephisus at Orchomenos in Bœotia,[13] and the Olbios at Pheneus in Arcadia,[14] where also the "Katavothra" or subterranean outlets from the bed of lake Pheneos were said to be artificial and the work of Heracles.

[11]Paus. vii. 2. 11.
[12]Paus. v. 1. 9.
[13]Paus. ix. 38. 7.
[14]Paus. viii. 14. 3.

Heracles was then a pioneer of engineering and sanitary reform!

Such versatility and unbounded energy are natural and to be expected in a man of strong character and high descent, who yet was unburdened with the immediate responsibilities of government, and Heracles was just such a man.

His constant collision with the constituted authorities, and indeed with the gods themselves, mark him as the great "Progressive" of his age, while his conflict with Apollo at Delphi shows him in the light of the champion of the old race against the new. On the other hand, the institution by him of the games of Zeus at Olympia is bound up with the importation of the poplar from Epirus. So great a traveller as Heracles would be certain to introduce new beliefs gathered in his wanderings, and the coincidence of the simultaneous arrival of the Epirote god, and the tree whose wood was used for his sacrifice, is too startling to be overlooked. Moreover, his co-operation with Apollo in the founding of cities,[15] and his activity in as a founder of shrines of gods of the new order (Apollo[16] and Asklepios,[17]) seems to show that his progressive tendencies were stronger than his racial prejudice.

The exile of his sons—or rather probably his "party"—and their return to Greece (the "return of the Heraclidae") as leaders of the Dorian inva-

[15]Paus. iii. 21. 8.
[16]Paus. viii. 15. 5.
[17]Paus. iii. 19. 7.

sion may be very simply explained. Heracles in his northern wanderings had doubtless met the Dorian tribes, and to them his exiled followers turned to avenge their wrongs. Indeed it is more than probable that the immunity of Attica from the Dorian invasion which swept the rest of Greece (except Arcadia) was due to the fact that Athens afforded a shelter to the Heraclidae when they fled from the persecution of Eurystheus.

Heracles then was a man—a historical personage, whose life played a great part in the history of his time. It was as a man—a great Hero—that he was worshipped for centuries before he was formally acknowledged as a god, when his titles, "Averter of Evil," "Saviour," and the like indicate the close human sympathy which pervaded his worship.

That which is true of Heracles is true also of Theseus, Cadmus, Minos, and the other makers of the half-forgotten history of an age that was full of movement, of progress, and of vitality.

Of Asklepios, there is less to be said. Of Achaean descent, a mortal skilled in the healing art, he is in Homer's day no more than a "noble leech,"[18] whose sons Podaleirios and Machaon are the inheritors of his craft. The institution of his worship—in his lifetime, be it noted—by his great contemporary Heracles, indicates the appreciation felt by one great man for the work of another. For though we may be inclined to smile at the "science" of those days, it was, according to the

[18] Il. iv. 192. sqq.

standard of the times, but little short of miraculous.[19] And the first doctor has an even better claim to divine honours than the first engineer. Thus the process of making a god out of a man is extremely simple, and in the early days of civilization almost inevitable. And once a man becomes divine, stories are attached to his memory which are wholly supernatural, and the attributes of the gods are borrowed for his honour. Thus it is that the Heracles, who was of Tyrian descent through Andromeda, has borrowed the attributes of the Tyrian Melkarth, with whom he came in contact at both Tyre and Cadiz, and the magnifying mist of myth has obscured the actual personality of the man.

Asklepios was more systematically deified, and soon left behind him almost all trace of his mortal life. His worship, as a god, was at first almost confined to Epidaurus and later centralized there, though it was not until the fourth century. B.C. that his shrine attained to a pan-Hellenic importance. The hymn of Isyllus, an inscription discovered at Epidaurus in 1884,[20] gives his Epidaurian descent in full, and in it the junction of the human and divine elements in his pedigree is clearly discernible. Malos married the Muse Erato, and had a daughter Kleopheme Phlegyas, who lived at Epidaurus, married Kleopheme, whose daughter was called Aigle—"This was her name, but she was called Koronis on account of her beauty." Apollo betrayed Koronis and had a son by her whom he named Asklepios,

[19]Il. xi. 514.
[20]Kavvadhias, "Τὸ Ἱερὸν τοῦ Ἀσκληπιοῦ" p. 213 sqq.

from his mother's name Aigle, and made him the healer of disease and giver of health. But he slew Koronis before the birth of Asklepios, and snatched the babe from his mother's funeral pyre. The cause for which Apollo slew Koronis was, that ere Asklepios was born, she had been unfaithful to him. Ischys, son of Elatos, who came from Arcadia,[21] was the name of him who had lured her from her allegiance : and as a matter of fact the real father of Asklepios was probably this same Arcadian, Apollo being foisted into the story when it was necessary to give Asklepios a divine descent. This was the deliberate method of deifying a mortal. Heracles never became so thoroughly defied as Asklepios, because the details of his life were too well preserved, and because his exploits were less specialized, more sensational and more intelligible than those of the first great physician.

These two instances of the deified mortal are, however, sufficient to illustrate the general principles on which the circle of the gods received additions from the ranks of mortal men.

[21]Pindar. Pyth. iii.

CHAPTER V

WERE THE GREEKS IDOLATORS?

In the earliest times, Greek gods were not represented by images. For until they had assumed some definite outward form it was of course impossible that they should be represented in that form. But even before the appearance of the god was definitely fixed in the mind of the worshipper, the desire to *localize* the divinity for the purpose of worship was fully developed. And the difficulty was met by assigning to natural objects the function of representing the god. These natural objects were treated with respect, with the idea that the god would accept, as offered to himself, the attentions paid to his inanimate representative. The principles upon which such objects were chosen were many and diverse. It is easy to see how meteoric stones, about which the tradition of their fall from heaven still lingered, would come to be regarded as representative of a god. Stones which were remarkable for their position—or supposed position—also became objects of veneration. For example, stones which were supposed to mark the centre of the earth were always associated very closely with the local god, and regarded as his

seat, or his abiding place. Any big stone, round for preference, would easily earn such a reputation from local pride. An example is the Omphalos, or "navel-stone" of Apollo at Delphi, which was supposed to mark the centre of the world. Size, colour, shape, and position in fact, all played their part in giving a sacred character to a stone, and there is little doubt that the peculiar pillar-shape of the statues of Hermes, the god of travellers, which survived all through Greek history, was due to the primitive veneration of stones which served as landmarks to the wayfarer. The stones which stood at crossways were always objects of great attention on the part of the primitive Greek, and it is easy to see how he might come to feel the presence of a kindly god in a stone which showed him the way to his journey's end.

Trees also are conspicuous among the objects of this primitive worship, but here, though the ultimate result, that of identification with the worship of a later god, is often the same, the process of origin is somewhat different. A tree is a living thing. It grows, it changes with changing seasons, it moves in the breeze, and a voice rustles through its branches. Thus a great, or a lonely, or a misshapen tree is deemed to have a spirit dwelling within it. It is regarded with awe[1] (to this day the Greek peasant fears to fell such a tree, and shuns its shade for fear of the "Nereides," the

[1]Paus. viii. 24. 7. Some very tall cypresses at Psophis in Arcadia were called "Maidens," and no one would fell them. They were also said to mark the grave of Alkmaion, and to be sacred to him.

fairies, as we should call them, ghosts of forgotten gods) perhaps an enclosure is built around it, and its fruit is sacred to the indwelling spirit.[2]

When a distinct personality was given to the god so symbolized, not only the individual tree, but all of its kind came to be sacred to that god. The white poplar was the only wood used in the sacrifices to Zeus at Olympia,[3] and the trees which provided the fuel were brought to Olympia from Epirus by Heracles, when he instituted the worship of Zeus in the Peloponnese. Thus a particular kind of tree is seen to be essential to the worship of a particular god, and follows that god in his migrations. Or it is even possible that the converse may be true, and that the name of Zeus was so inextricably associated with the white poplar, that the importation of the tree entailed the importation of the cult.

The evidence for tree-worship in the great prehistoric civilizaton of Greece and the Aegean is both monumental and literary. Excavations on Mycenæan and pre-Mycenæan sites such as Tiryns, the Argive Heræum, and Gnossos have brought to light objects which prove the prevalence of this form of worship in Greece in the second millennium B.C. The article by Mr. A. J. Evans,

[2]See Journal of Hellenic Studies, Vol. xxi. p. 103, for the illustration of a remarkable steatite pyxis discovered in Crete by Mr. Arthur Evans. On it is depicted an altar, and in the background a fig tree in an enclosure of masonry. This tree, in my opinion, was almost certainly sacred to the chthonic Dionysos. (See the chapter on "Mysteries" in the present work.

[3]Paus. v. 13, 3.

in the Journal of Hellenic Studies, to which reference has just been made,[4] deals with a continuous series of gems from Gnossos and Mycenae illustrative of Tree and Pillar worship, and of the gradual growth of the anthropomorphic idea, symbolized at first by a little figure of the deity beside his sacred stone or tree, later by the human figure attended by guardian beasts.

It would be rash, however, to assert that the veneration of stones and trees is always associated with a universal, formless, and indefinite nature power. Mere accidents of shape and position cannot account for the sanctity of groups of stones and pillars of regular shape, placed in position by human agency, or of trees planted and tended by man. These derived their sanctity from a preconceived idea, or from the sanctity, already existent, of the spot in which they were placed. And there is no doubt that ancestor-worship played a very large part in the fixing of such foci of worship. Here this man died—"Here lies great Zeus, whom men call God"—and here was this man born. There was such-an-one cured of a disease, there another set out upon or returned from a voyage or expedition, or met with a great adventure.[5] A stone was raised, or a tree planted, to mark the spot, just as Jacob "took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, *and poured oil upon the top of it*," and called the place

[4] Note 2.

[5] Paus. i. 23. 5.; 42. 5.; ii. 31. 4.; iii. 22. 1. and a host of similar instances in Pausanias alone.

"the house of God." The "oak of weeping" mentioned in the same chapter, earned a name by marking the burial-place of Deborah.[6]

It is probable that in the majority of cases the process was actually reversed, and that the scene of the action or incident commemorated was transferred to some great stone not too far away. If this be true, the line of demarcation between the class of objects whose sanctity is their own, and of those which borrow it from history, is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to define.

The literary evidence for the worship of such stones, trees and pillars in ancient Greece is abundant and definite, though, indeed, enough of such worship survives in various parts of the world, with identical observances, to make the meaning of the "Mycenæan" gem-pictures clearly intelligible, apart from the literary evidence. The "Itinerary" of Pausanias is full of allusions to such stones, with an account of the methods used in doing them honour. He gives also a list of the sacred trees which he considered the most ancient in Greece, all of which are associated in some way with god or hero. He says:—"If I had to make out a list,[7] in accordance with Greek tradition, of the oldest trees which still stand alive and hale, I should say that the oldest is the willow that grows in the sanctuary of Hera at Samos; next to it are the oak at Dodona, the olive on the Acropolis, and the

[6]Genesis. xxviii. 18. xxxi. 46., xxxv. 8 and 14.

[7]Paus. viii. 23. 5. See also Paus. vii. 4. 4, and Note 20 on Ch. iii.

olive at Delos. The Syrians would give the third place in point of age to the laurel which grows in their land. Of all other trees this plane-tree" (the one planted by Menelaos at Caphyae in Arcadia when mustering his troops for Troy) " is the most ancient.

Theophrastos,[8] in his description of the superstitious man, gives an amusing sketch of the worship of a sacred stone. " The superstitious man always anoints the smooth stones which stand at the crossways, with oil from a little jar, nor does he pass on his way till he has been down on his knees and done reverence to them." The " superstition " of the time of Theophrastos (iv. century B.C.) was the general worship of prehistoric Greece. And the custom is one which obtains or has obtained in almost every corner of the world irrespective of race.

From the evidence of the Mycenean gems, again, it is obvious that dancing[9] formed part of the primitive ritual of worship, and where the stones marked the grave of some great one, mourning was also included; there is evidence, too, of sacrifice of living things and even human beings at the shrines of the dead. But this point will be more fully discussed later.

It was hardly to be expected that these purely aniconic forms would long suffice to represent the gods of a people among whom the anthropomorphic idea was rapidly growing in strength. Mycenaean

[8]Theophr. Eth. Characteres. xvii.
[9]See Mr. A. J. Evans, J. H. S. loc. cit.

gems already begin to show the human figure or strange semi-beast forms in the place of the cairn, tree or pillar. Gods and goddesses are seen receiving the homage of their worshippers, and in and about the ruins of the great cities and palaces of the age of Proitos and Perseus, a host of tiny human figures in terra-cotta have been found, which may be said to represent the gods of the pre-Homeric people of Greece. The great upheaval of the Dorian invasion (1000 B.C.) with the returning Heraclidae, put a stop to artistic progress for a couple of centuries, but even during this time, the stones and trees of the gods were growing into images by slow but steady stages. The earliest statues yet retained the pillar-, plank-, or tree-form of the original object of veneration, but the human form was indicated by a head carved on the top, and in some cases, notably in that of the "Black Demeter" at Phigaleia, the horse form of the old vegetation spirit was perpetuated and represented in the statue. Even when the skill of the sculptor advanced, and stone took the place of wood, the old forms were reproduced in the new material,[10] and thus, as the oldest "image" of the Artemis of Naxos had been a wooden board, the stone statue which replaced it was shaped like a board with head, arms and feet. In later times, when the sculptor's art reached its highest point, it was still to these ugly old posts that the greatest veneration was paid. Thus, it was the old wooden statue of Hera at Argos, which was carried every

[10]Paus. viii. 42. 7.

year to the purification, and at Athens it was the old image of Athena Polias to whom a new peplos, or robe, was offered year by year. The glorious beauty of the gods as represented by the sculptors of the fifth century B.C. was a matter of common acceptance and belief, but that could not alter the conviction that the spirit of the deity was housed in the ancient relic which had been the focus of the primæval worship. The ideal works of the great sculptors were *imaginary portraits of the gods*, not cult images. The cult image was in no sense a portrait, but simply a guarantee of the invisible divine presence—a medium through which man could communicate with the deity. Artistic value counted for nothing beside antiquity and authenticity. This is a strong proof, if proof were needed, that the Greeks never *identified* their images with their gods. For the old stone or statue was not like the god, but a sacrament of him. The beautiful statue was a portrait of him, but no more.

Snakes were naturally associated with the underworld by primitive man, from the nature of their dwellings in caves and holes, and at the oracles of chthonic deities snakes have a special prominence and significance, as for example the sacred snake at the oracle of Trophonios.[11] Cities and sanctuaries were founded where snakes dived into the ground.[12] Cecrops, the earliest ancestor of the earth-born Athenians, was half snake, half man, as was Erichthonios also. And the giants, the chaotic

[11]Paus. x. 39. 3.
[12]Paus. iii. 23. 7., vi. 20. 5.

earth-powers of the days before the gods, were figured also as half man, half snake.

We have already seen that Poseidon was figured as a bull in Crete, and Kronos and Demeter both appear in horse-form. Hera may once have been a cow, Athena an owl or a gull,[11] and Callisto a bear. Apollo succeeded a wolf-god in more than one sanctuary, and indeed there is scarcely a god in the pantheon whose cult does not contain some trace of animal-symbolism.

The animal, however, stood in the same relation to the god as did the stone or tree. It was the manifestation of a god, not the god himself, although in minds not yet attuned to subtleties of distinction, the line between the two was but vaguely drawn. Indeed, the same vagueness hangs about all sacramental objects and observances in all religions and all ages, and the confusion of the symbol with the idea symbolized has worked the downfall of many a great religious conception.

This early beast-symbolism was incorporated into the late religious in various ways, or occasionally eliminated by a myth invented with that deliberate intent, as in the case of the Python, slain by Apollo. The most usual method, however, was to constitute the beast the attendant or attribute of the god. Examples are the horned hind of the Hyperborean Artemis, the bear-dances in honour of Artemis at Brauron, and the owl of Athena. In dealing with "Sacrifice" it will be shown how, in many cases, the luck-animal of a tribe becomes the

[11] Paus. x. 39. 3.

sacrificial animal of the god whom it represented.

The inanimate symbols were of course far more easily incorporated in the more advanced worship. Thus the olive became the gift of Athena to Attica, and the pomegranate of Persephone, once the symbol of fertility, became the emblem of the Queen of Death, and a new meaning was found in its blood-red flesh.

Other attributes were those which belonged to the completed personality of the god, and typified his particular province. These, naturally, are most prominent to the fully developed anthropomorphic religion, though even here also we may note traces of direct worship of such objects, as symbols of divinity complete in themselves. Thus the lightning was doubtless revered before the thunderbolt became the attribute of Zeus : the fisherman looked upon his trident as the symbol of his god, and paid it reverence accordingly, before it became the distinguishing mark of Poseidon. And it has been seen that the Aegis was a battle-spell before it became an instrument of terror in the hands of the gods. Kaineus set up his spear in the market-place[12] and made the people do honour to it as to a god, and the Scythians worshipped a sword as the emblem of the war-god.[13] The attributes of the gods are really complete in themselves, and the human form is an accident—inevitable but not essential. And it was only in the decadent days of Greek religion that the gods were represented

[12]Paus. iii. 23. 7., vi. 20. 5.
[13]Paus. i. 5. 3. and 41. 6.

in art without their attributes, and rendered recognizable solely through type of features or expression, and bodily form. Such representation brought the gods down to the very level of humanity, in that the artist claimed to be able to show the whole nature of the god in the limits of a human body, while the old uncouth statues, by the frank avowal of incapability to do more than suggest the god and his sphere of activity in a kind of shorthand,[14] retained the veneration of their votaries, even though standing side by side with the ideal god-portraits of a Pheidias or a Praxiteles.

Thus it will be clearly seen that in theory at any rate the Greeks were never "idolators." In practice, the mind of the unthinking and ignorant draws no line between the symbol and the symbolized. But that is as true of the Greek peasant of to-day, kneeling before the smoke-blackened eikon of the Panagia, as it was of the Greek peasant of three thousand years back, pouring oil upon the wayside stone, or making offerings to his fishing-spear.

[14]Scholiast Apoll. Rhod. Argonaut. i. 57.

CHAPTER VI

SACRIFICE AND PRAYER

THE original motives of sacrifice arise from three natural desires of man—first, to establish communion or kinship with the god—secondly, to ensure his favour, and thirdly, to escape his wrath. Mr. Robertson Smith[1] has accordingly divided sacrifices into three classes corresponding to these motives, 1 : mystic, 2 : honorific or donatory, 3 : piacular, Of these three it is impossible to say which owns the greatest antiquity, or which held the most prominent place in Greek worship. On the one hand, the mystic sacrifice is so closely connected with the primæval form of the god to whom it is offered, that it would seem to be coeval with that form. But on the other hand, we have to reckon with the possibility that sacrifice existed before the gods were symbolized by any form at all, in which case the donatory sacrifice would be likely to take precedence.

To enter upon a discussion of totemism is impossible in the limits of this volume. It must suffice to remind the reader of the frequent recurrence of wild-animal forms among the earliest

[1]Ency. Brit. Art. "Sacrifice."

Greek gods, and to suggest that these arose from the symbolization of the god by the luck-animal of the clan. This luck-animal was regarded as sacred, and to kill one of its kind was looked upon as murder.[2] But on solemn occasions, the sacred animal was killed and eaten, or its blood tasted, by the members of the clan as a means of renewing the blood-fellowship between the tribe and its totem. As the totemisic worship gave way to a clearer apprehension of the divine, this animal naturally became the appropriate sacrifice to the anthropomorphic god who had displaced it as an object of direct veneration. It was almost certainly for this reason that bulls and horses were sacrificed to Poseidon, bears to Artemis and wolves to Apollo.[3]

Another and more advanced means of selecting the appropriate animal for sacrifice was the consideration of the functions of that god for whom the sacrifice was destined. Thus black animals were commonly sacrificed to gods of the lower world, and to departed heroes. A black ram, for example, was sacrificed to Pelops.[4] A black bull was the sacrifice made by the Thessalians at the grave of Achilles at Troy.[5] Plutarch says that a black bull was sacrificed annually to the Greeks who fell in the battle of Plataia.[6]

[2]Cp. the Bouphonia, Ch. III., p.

[3]Cp. Aristophanes "Lysistrata." The "bear-dances" perpetuate the old ritual of the totemistic worship, and the bear-sacrifice indicated in the story of Kallisto. (Paus. viii. 3. 6.)

[4]Paus. v. 13. 2.

[5]Philostratus. Heroica xx. 25 sqy.

[6]Plutarch, Aristides 21.

Similarly, boars were sacrificed to Apollo, the hunter-god, and birds, boars and other wild animals were the burnt offering to Artemis at Patrae.[7] Indeed instances might be multiplied indefinitely.

Thus it would seem that the object of the "mystic" sacrifice was to establish a relationship between the god and his worshippers, for the ceremony generally included the eating of the victim's flesh, and that victim was chosen as being the nearest animal type of the god, in other words, his sacrament.

The principle involved in the donative sacrifice is far simpler. Its object was two-fold: firstly, to obtain favours, and secondly, to give thanks for favours received. Often the same sacrifice was made to do duty for both prayer and thanksgiving. The recognised method as between man and man, of obtaining a favour, is to give something for it, and the gods being considered to possess the same tastes, desires, and nature as men, the same course was the natural one to pursue in their case. Therefore the kind of offering appropriate to such sacrifice was essentially *useful*. The greatest happiness possible to man in a primitive state of life was a full stomach, and accordingly his gifts to the gods consisted of food, both animal and vegetable. The animals sacrificed were those which the worshipper considered the best to eat.

The idea of feeding the god was carried out with great directness. The blood of the victim was poured upon the sacred stone or tree, that it might

[7]Pausanias vii. 18. 11-13.

so reach the god whose presence pervaded the locality. The flesh was burned before the sacred object, in order that, in the shape of smoke and savour, it might satisfy the divine hunger. In later times only a part of the victims was burned, the rest being eaten by the priests, the earthly representatives of the god.

In such sacrifices great attention was paid to the subsidiary ceremonies of purification, in order that the giver might offer with clean hands a pure gift to the god. And the sacrifice was accompanied by short prayers or invocations, generally containing the promise of future sacrifice if the present request were granted. There is a vivid account of such a sacrificial scene in the "Argonautica" of Apollonius Rhodius,[8] which is here given at length.

Anon they raised with toil the wave-worn stones,
And heaped an altar at the water's edge,
Named for Apollo, Master of the Shore,
Protector of embarking mariners.
Thereon with speed dry olive-wood they strewed.
Meantime from where the cattle stood apart
King Jason's herdsmen chose a pair of bulls
And drove them forward. To the altar-side
Youths, god-like in a goodly company,
Led forth the victims, while attentive hands
Held ready for the purifying rite
The lustral bowl and bruised barley-grain.
Then Jason raised his voice in solemn prayer

[8]Apoll. Rhod. Argonaut. i. 401.

To great Apollo, father of his line :—
Hear, Lord, who hast thy home in Pagasae,
And in Aesonis, city of my sire,
Thou who dids't promise at thy Pythian fane
To me who sought thy word, that sure and clear
Thou woulds't reveal the issue and the end
Of this our journey—Ay, for all our toils
Thy very self I hold responsible—
Do thou thyself now bear our bark and crew
All safe and sound and swiftly back again
To distant Hellas. Then for every man
Who reaches home in safety, in return
A glorious offering of so many bulls—
For every man a bull—we promise thee.
And other gifts to Delphi I will bring,
Countless in number, and to Delos more.
Now come, Far Shooter, now and here receive
The sacrifice we offer ere we sail,
Safe-conduct-money for this ship of ours.
Lord, by thy counsel in propitious hour
May I cast off my moorings—gently blow
The wind that wafts us o'er a smiling deep.

Thus as he prayed, he cast the barley round
And two stood girt and ready by the bulls,
Ancaeus and the mighty Heracles,
To each a victim. Full upon the brow
Between the eyes the hero's club descends.
Straight falling where he stood the beast lay prone
And pressed the earth. His fellow of the herd
Ancaeus slew. First the deep throat he cut,
Then with an axe of bronze he hacked apart

The mighty sinews. With a headlong fall
The ox pitched forward over both his horns.
Swiftly the company despatched them both,
And stript the hides, divided up the flesh
And cut away the dedicated thighs
And wrapped them well together in the fat,
Then set them on the fire-wood to burn.
And Jason poured libation of pure wine
Unmixed with water, while the watching seer,
Idmon the skilful, marked with joy the glow
That shone all ways about the barley cakes.
The smoke in whirling eddies flushed with flame
Shot swiftly skyward. 'Twas a kindly sign.
Then spake he the whole counsel of the god
"The destiny and fate decreed by heaven
Is this: for you—to win success at last
In taking home the Fleece. But many a toil
And countless labours, ere you reach the goal
Or see your homes again, before you lie.
For me—a harder fate. By cruel heaven
I am condemned far, far away to die
In the wide land of Asia. This I knew
Long since, by unpropitious omens warned
Already, ere I left my native land
And boarded Argo. Yet in doing so
I leave my house a legacy of fame."
Thus spake he. They, who heard the prophecy,
Joyed all at homing. But for Idmon's fate
Sharp sorrow held them, that their seer should die.

This passage is illustrative of almost every detail of the ordinary donative sacrifice. The whole pro-

cess is described from the building of the altar to the drawing of omens from the sacrifice. The following points will be noted.—Anything does for an altar, which can be built at a moment's notice. The *place* is of far more importance than the material. The sacrifice is to be made to ensure a safe voyage, and the altar is accordingly built by the sea shore. All the great gods alike have a kind of universal power over all elements. Apollo, who is not essentially a sea-god, is here worshipped as a god of the Beach and of Embarkation. The explanation is found a few lines lower down. Jason looks upon Apollo as the god of his house, and therefore considers him the right deity to invoke *under all circumstances alike*. This brings out the intensely *tribal* nature of Greek worship. The tribal relationship with the god is of more importance than his specialized aspect, and the patron-god of a tribe was looked upon by that tribe as omnipotent. Thus, even amid the multiplicity of gods, the monotheistic idea was never entirely lost.

Next, before the actual sacrifice begins, the sacrificant is purified by washing of hands and the victims and the altar by the scattering of barley meal.

The next part of the ceremony is the prayer, which is most illuminating. Jason appeals to his patron-god on the grounds of relationship. He reminds Apollo that responsibility for his present situation lies at the door of the god because it was on the strength of the divine promise that the

expedition was undertaken. "You have got me into this coil," he says, "it is your business to get me out of it." "If you act fairly to us," he goes on to say, "we will pay you for it on a fixed scale—an ox for every man who reaches home alive." Thus the god is reminded that the value of the sacrifice depends on his own good behaviour. The extra bonus of gifts to the two great sanctuaries of Apollo is not a payment but a bribe—a personal offer from Jason on his own account.[9] The sacrifice actually in progress is next described in plain terms as the fee for safe-conduct on the homeward voyage[10]—paid in advance. Thus the whole tone of the prayer implies that Apollo will be guilty of a distinct breach of faith if he does not look after the safety of his votary.

The two oxen are then slaughtered—one each, perhaps, as the scholiast suggests, for Apollo of the Beach and of Embarkation, and the poet carefully notes the way in which each one falls, for the fall of the sacrificial beast was a source of divination. The thighs, wrapped in fat, are burned upon the altar, as the recognised portion due to the god. The remainder is apportioned among the members of the crew.

As the sacrifice burns, the flames ascending from the flesh and the cakes of barley meal which accompany it, are closely watched by Idmon[11] the seer,

[9]The word δῶρα implies dedication of wealth of an imperishable nature, as opposed to the transitory delight of food.

[10]Ἐπίβαθρα is the regular word for a ferry-man's fee.

[11]The name means "skilful."

who interprets their meaning. Because the fire is bright, and the smoke is reddened by the flame as it whirls swiftly upwards, the omens are good. Idmon prophesies his own death from omens which he saw before he left home.

The Greek prayer, then, is a somewhat sordid affair, the driving of a bargain rather than an act of worship. Sacrifices and dedications of thanksgiving were for the most part made in fulfilment of a vow, and were rather like the meeting of a promissory note.

Prayer and cursing, too, are on exactly the same basis. No moral principle is involved, as the gratification of a wish is the only aim of the worshipper. If that wish involves the destruction of an enemy, the process is precisely the same. "Keep me safe, and I will pay you for it, injure or destroy those I hate, and I will pay you for it," says the Greek to his gods. Thus the worship of the Greeks reveals the fact that they regarded their gods as possessed of unlimited power, which they were ready to use in favour of the highest bidder.

The sacrifice of a human victim in donative sacrifice to a god was rare, for even in very early times the gods were not cannibals. But there are instances of such offerings, while the sacrifice of human beings at the grave of a departed hero was more common (witness the slaughter of Trojan captives at the grave of Patroklos[12]), and was doubtless prompted by the desire to provide the ghost with

[12]Iliad xxiii, 22.

ghostly slaves. But in piacular sacrifice it is more frequent, as will be seen below.

Piacular sacrifice was a sacrifice offered to appease the wrath of the god, by whatever means it might have been aroused. It was not a regular observance, like donative sacrifice, for while hunger is a normal and regularly recurring condition, anger is not. The wrath of a god was either the result of some recognisable act or else the cause of it was unknown. In the former case, the person or state guilty of the offensive deed must be punished or purified. In the latter case, the cause of the divine displeasure and the means of appeasing it had to be ascertained from an oracle, or if this were impossible, an attempt had to be made to satisfy the wrath of heaven by the offering of something of exceptional value.

Two ideas were involved in the expiation of a crime—purification and compensation. Of these two the latter is probably the older. It implies no higher principle than that everything has its price, which must be duly paid. It was this principle which exacted piacular sacrifices in times of extraordinary prosperity, for fear lest the wrath of the gods might be roused by the spectacle of excessive human happiness. On the other hand the Homeric religion does not seem to have exacted any penalty for murder beyond compensation of the relatives of the victim. But compensation paid to the gods implies an admisison of the existence of moral law, so that the purificatory idea soon arose out of that of compensation. The principle form of un-

cleanness demanding purification was homicide. Not only men and heroes, but gods as well, needed purification after the shedding of blood. It was necessary for Apollo to be cleansed from blood-guiltiness after slaying the Python[13] no less than for Herakles when he had slain Iphitos,[14] or Orestes after the murder of Clytaimnestra.[15] The justification of the deed made no difference. The mere fact of having shed blood in any circumstances, save those of war, rendered the shedder unclean, and accidental homicide demanded the same expiation as deliberate murder. Even inanimate objects were held guilty of homicide if they caused the death of a human being or a sacred animal, and had to undergo purification.[16]

The salient features of piacular rites are few and easily recognizable. Firstly, purification could not take place near the scene of the murder. The slayer was obliged to go to some other city or land to be cleansed. No doubt this necessity arose in the first instance from the palpable advisability of avoiding retribution on the part of the victim's relations or fellow-citizens. The angry ghost, too, of the murdered man, remaining on the spot, would render the rites ineffectual by his adverse influence.

Another peculiarity of piacular sacrifice is that the purification was performed and absolution pro-

[13]Paus. ii. 7. 7.
[14]Paus. iii. 15. 3.
[15]Paus. viii. 34. 1 sqq. ii. 31. 8.
[16]Paus. vi. ii. 6-9. The statue of one Theagenes fell on a man and killed him. The statue was found guilty of murder and thrown into the sea.

nounced without reference to the details of the crime. Thus Croesus first purifies Adrastos and then inquires whom he has killed,[17] and Circe does as much for Jason and Medeia with as little knowledge.[18]

Until purification had been performed no city would receive a homicide. Afterwards he was restored to communion with his fellow men.

The victims offered in such sacrifice were not eaten, as were those of the donative sacrifice. The bodies were got rid of by burning, burying or casting them into the sea. The reason for this was probably that they were supposed to absorb the pollution of the crime, and that thus they would communicate that pollution to anyone who partook of them.

The pollution of bloodshed belonged as much to states as to individuals. Civil war and massacre were looked upon as state-pollution, and the city which had been visited with these disasters had to be purified. Similarly, if fugitives whose crimes seemed too awful for redemption took refuge in a city or district, they were expelled, and the place contaminated by their presence was purified from the " infection " of crime.[19]

A somewhat peculiar development of this idea of expiation is what may be called " cumulative guilt." In many parts of Greece it was the custom for the state to make an annual sacrifice of purifi-

[17]Herod. 1. 35.
[18]Apoll. Rhod. Argonaut. iv. 702.
[19]Paus. ii. 20. 2. Plutarch, Solon C. 12.

cation, plainly with the object of making a fresh start with clean hands year by year. That the victim in these cases was frequently a human being is evidence of the great antiquity of the observance, and it is probable that it actually preceded the purification of individuals, though it probably arose in the first instance from a mystic rather than a piacular source. Thus at Rhodes a man was yearly sacrificed to Kronos, and at Leukas a man was thrown from a cliff into the sea, though he was given a chance of life, feathers and live birds being attached to him to lighten his fall, while boats awaited him to rescue him if he reached the sea alive. Indeed this tendency to soften the savagery of the rite is everywhere to be observed. In some cases bleeding was substituted for immolation,[20] in others the victim was led to the altar and allowed to escape, while in others again animals were treated as human beings for some time before being sacrificed.[21] In the earlier forms of the worship of Brauronian Artemis, the priest sacrificed a bear, *calling it his daughter*. In some cases even clay images of human beings were sacrificed in place of real victims. Such mitigatory devices would naturally appear first in human sacrifices of regular recurrence.

Another form of piacular sacrifice, which occasionally involved the shedding of human blood, was the *anticipatory* sacrifice. When it was evident that the gods were angry, but that the worst was yet to come, and might be averted, a sacrifice of great

[20] Paus. iii. 16. 10.
[21] Aelian. Nat. Anim. xii. 34.

value was offered to stay the divine hand. Thus Kodros gave his own life for Athens, and Iphigenia was sacrificed to Artemis in the hope of changing the wrath of the goddess into favour. There was a large proportion of this anticipatory element in the annual human sacrifices mentioned above.

The principle underlying human sacrifice as a purificatory rite is identical with that of the Semitic "scape-goat." Upon the victim is heaped the responsibility for all the sin of the state, and he carries it away with him in his death. It is this idea which accounts for the frequency of human sacrifice to nature-gods. A long drought, a bad harvest, a cattle-plague, all pointed to the anger of the nature-god. If the cause of offence could be concentrated in one individual, and that individual "punished," then the god might be appeased, and might cease to withhold his favour. Donative sacrifice is, then, a payment for benefits received or anticipated: piacular sacrifice is compensation for an injury done. In the former case it is sufficient that the sacrifice should give pleasure to the recipient: in the second it is necessary that it should slake his thirst for revenge. Thus while the donative sacrifice consists merely of the best that the worshipper can afford, the piacular must be the utmost that he can pay: and as human life is the most precious thing to human beings, it was the first and most natural offering to an outraged god. "It is expedient that one man should die for the people."

But of course in individual or ceremonial purifications, no human victim was necessary or possible,

and a different principle is involved, approaching more nearly to magic than to compensation. It was plainly impossible that a life should be exacted for a life if the guilty person were to derive any benefit from the purification : and as nothing short of this price could be considered as a practical compensation to the gods, the ceremonies assumed a purely symbolical form. Piacula on account of crime, and also those of a completely formal nature, such as the purifications which preceded act of worship, were made, for the most part, to the gods of the lower world. The most usual victim in purificatory sacrifice was the pig, which was specially associated with earth-deities, and the blood of a pig was used in all but the very simplest forms of purification. This animal was also the piacular victim of the Romans, and the sacrifice by them of swine in the temple at Jerusalem, which roused the fury of the Jews, was probably intended as an act of purification rather than of desecration.

Washing in spring water was also a natural part of such ceremonies, and as the passage cited from Apollonius shows, the sprinkling of barley-meal also had a cleansing significance. The blood sacrifice was destined either to appease the gods of the lower world, or perhaps, in cases of homicide, the shade of the departed. The washing with water and the scattering of meal constituted an intermediate stage of the proceedings, and may have been intended to cleanse the sacrificants for the offering of bloodless and wineless sacrifice with which the gods of the upper heaven were implored to ratify

the purification, and to restrain the forces of vengeance. At any rate, the predominant feature of the first half of the sacrifice is *washing*, blood being washed from the hands with water, and the second, *purity*, the bloodless sacrifice being considered more pure than the flesh-offering. The ceremony as a whole, therefore, symbolizes the removal of a stain, and the consequent purity of the person or state on whose behalf the sacrifice is made.[23]

To sum up, it may be said that on the whole, the Greek sacrificial system is based upon the principle of fair dealing as between god and man: that the human element in sacrifice was not due to a conception of the gods as delighting in human blood, but as sternly demanding the price for infractions of divine law: and that the constant, and even superstitiously trivial use of purificatory rites was the outcome of a mental attitude which perceived the presence of the gods in the most ordinary routine of every-day life. In the sacrificial observances of the Greeks is found every element of worship save the highest. For the earliest donative and piacular sacrifices were prompted by fear and self-interest, their form was dictated by sympathy, which selected a humanly intelligible symbolism as the most likely to reach the understanding of gods as human as they were divine: sacrifice, the giving of the best or most appropriate, is fundamental in the sacrificial system, and the constant presence of the gods in daily life rendered every action a kind of service, while the

[23]See also Chapter viii. on "Mysteries" for the deeper sacramental meaning of human sacrifice.

inherent sense of right and wrong—the idea of law, and so of discipline—was the foundation upon which the whole system rested. Its rules might be few and elastic; it might be hard, now and then, to distinguish between prayer and magic of the blackest kind; but it was the gods who punished, and the gods to whom atonement was made for those crimes which were universally recognised as such throughout the Greek world.

CHAPTER VII

DIVINATION AND ORACLES

A DESIRE to peer into the future is a characteristic common to every race and every time. But the extent to which that desire is indulged and sanctioned by religion depends very much upon the degree of intimacy or sympathy existing between the gods and their worshippers. Naturally, therefore, the Greeks regarded this reading of the future not merely as desirable, but even as a religious and practical necessity.

Believing, as they did, that the gods were ever with them, directing the smallest events of every day life, believing that the future was as certain as the past, and that it lay within the knowledge of the gods, and to a great extent under their control, they were ever anxious to see into that future, and to learn the will of heaven. More than this, every doubt, perplexity, suspicion or ailment was taken for solution or cure to some god, who thus played many parts, as lawyer, detective, doctor, or confidential adviser. States, no less than individuals, were guided in their actions by the direct instructions of the gods, who also acted as arbitrators in cases where an appeal to arms seemed inexpedient or unjustifiable. The individual suffering

from an obstinate disorder, and the state racked with dissension, pestilence, or war, alike appeared to heaven for advice. This being so, it was but natural that oracles and omens should enjoy a wide repute in Greece. And it was no less natural that imposture and charlatanism should be so rife as to discredit many methods of divination which had had their origin in the simple faith of the inquirer and the honest belief of the soothsayer in his own inspiration.

Naturally also, there were many methods of ascertaining the future, and of inquiring the divine will. And the repute of these methods varied in a direct ratio to their simplicity. They may be divided broadly into three classes, (1), accidental omens: ἄτεχνα, that is, plainly intelligible to the man in the street, and τεχνικά, those which could only be interpreted by persons endowed with a more detailed knowledge of the subject, but none the less of fixed and ascertained meaning: (2), sacrificial omens deliberately sought by the sacrificant and interpreted by the attendant soothsayer (see Chapter vi., p. 99): and (3), oracles, which were either the direct utterance of a god, delivered through the medium of a person devoted to his service, and put into form by his priests, as that of Apollo and Delphi, or else omens drawn from some object or place sacred to a god, and similarly interpreted. To this class belong the oracle of the oak of Zeus at Dodona, the dream oracle of Asklepios at Epidaurus, and the vision-oracle of Trophonios at Lebadea.

The class of accidental or unsought omens is of

course the largest and most varied, and ranges from the thunder of the gods to the braying of an ass. Some of these signs were clearly intelligible to anyone, and needed no soothsayer to interpret them. And "artless" omens like these belong to every age and every race. The "superstitious man" of Theophrastos awakes a familiar echo in our memories, when—"if a weasel crosses his path, he will not go on, until someone else has gone ahead of him, or he has thrown three stones across the path."[1] For in our day, the hare[2] plays the same obstructive part as the weasel of Theophrastos. Everybody knows that to see one magpie is unlucky, while two together are lucky,—that a ladybird must not be dismissed without a spell. Greek life was full of such trivial omens—remnants, most of them, of the very earliest dawn of civilization, as indeed are our own superstitions,—and they were regarded in historic Greece very much in the same light as are their counterparts of modern times. To the less educated or more primitive they were of high importance, as they are, for example, to the Breton peasant; while they were derided, though perhaps secretly half believed, by the educated. The regular phrase for such omens was *ornis* (a bird), and Aristophanes laughs at the Athenians for calling a sneeze or an ass, a slave or a chance word, all "birds," and for attaching an ominous meaning to all alike.[3] But in the more primitive civiliza-

[1]Theophr. Eth. Charact. xvii.
[2]The hare was sacred to Persephone, and thus always possssed a certain sinister import.
[3]Aristoph. "Birds."

tion of Homer such portents had a very real significance to high and low alike, and the Iliad and Odyssey are full of instances of their use and meaning. Thunder and lightning at a critical moment were of course most unmistakable signs of divine interest. For instance, at the moment that Odysseus strings the bow, "Zeus thundered loud, showing forth his tokens. And steadfast goodly Odysseus was glad thereat in that the son of deep counselling Kronos, had sent him a sign."[4]

The Eagle, the bird of Zeus, was a constant instrument of divine messages and answers to prayer. Thus, when an eagle "surest sign among winged fowl," appears to the Greeks, and drops from its talons a fawn beside the altar of Zeus, Agamemnon knows that his prayer has been favourably heard.[5]

The phrase quoted above gives the origin of the word "bird" for an omen. The flight of birds was a fruitful source of augury, and many of the signs of the eagle, as the most important of birds, were well known to everybody, without the intervention of the soothsayer. By no means all birds, however, were fateful, and even an eagle might go about his own business unburdened by omens. Thus the skill of a professional interpreter was required to descry the more subtle omens of a birds' flight, and to read their meaning. Voice, direction, method of flight, and a host of minor considerations far too complicated for the layman to master, had

[4]Od. xxi. 412.
[5]Il. viii. 247.

to be taken into account before the signs could be read aright.

Again, certain sounds have their recognised significance. Says Penelope, '"Oh, if Odysseus might come again to his own country, soon would he and his son avenge the violence of these men." Even so she spake, and Telemachus sneezed loudly. And Penelope laughed, and straightway spake to Eumaeus winged words:—"Dost thou not mark how my son has sneezed a blessing on my words?" '[6]

Odysseus takes omens from chance words spoken in ignorance of his identity or his presence.[7] Indeed there was no end to the means adopted for forecasting the probable turn of events.

But the majority of omens required skilled interpretation, and to meet this need a class of soothsayers arose, whose business lay in prophecy and the reading of obscure omens. The power of such interpretation was not, however, absolutely confined to the professional diviner, for Odysseus reads the dream of Penelope[8] without hesitation. But dreams, as Penelope herself testifies in the same passage, are an unreliable source of information, for so many of them are lying portents, even though their meaning may be clear.

The soothsayer, then, had a flourishing occupation, whether he were attached to the state, or whether he practised on his own account. It should be clearly understood that interpreters of omens, and prophets, were not necssarily or even usually

[6]Od. xvii. 540.
[7]Od. xviii. 112., xx. 112.
[8]Od. xix. 536. sqq.

priests, but merely persons who had made omens and prophecy their especial study: and it is also necessary to discriminate between augury and prophecy. The latter required far more special powers than the former, for whereas augury consisted in interpreting the meaning of definite signs, prophecy was very nearly akin to divine prescience, and concerned itself but little with visible signs. Thus, while anyone might become a soothsayer, prophets almost always belonged to some family of long descent, and claimed the faculty of prophecy as a hereditary gift. Such a family was that of the Iamidae[9] at Elis, whose fame was spread over the whole Greek world.

In the Homeric age, there was but little mystery attached to the prophet. He was an eminently business-like person, who used his unusual powers as a means of livelihood. His prophetic state was not ecstatic, but normal, and he was of course skilled in all devices of augury as well. He was also able to inquire of the dead concerning the future, and to interpret their answers. The character of such prophets was eminently dignified, and Melampus, Chalcas, and Teiresias, are names of credit in Greek legend.

The interpretation of dreams of course played a large part in the profession of the soothsayer, though the unreliable nature, already noted, of the material upon which they had to work early brought the professors of this class of divination into disrepute, and the more respectable soothsayers were inclined

[9]Paus. vi. 2. 5., iii. 11. 6 sqq.

to leave it severely alone. Still, a dream of extremely obvious meaning was regarded even by such men as Socrates[10] as being a message from the gods, and as such was allowed to influence conduct.

But if unsought omens played so large a part in early Greek life, those which were deliberately sought were far more highly regarded in the developed civilization. It could not but be felt that to shape one's course by the evershifting light of accidental omens was neither practical nor convenient, and after Homeric days the sacrificial omen assumed the place of honour among methods of augury.

The magnificent speech of Prometheus[11] wherein he recounts the benfits which he has conferred upon mankind contains a list of the sacrificial sources of divination. Prometheus claims to have taught men all forms of divination—interpretation of dreams and the flight of birds, and

> —"I made clear to man
> The meaning of smooth entrails, and the hue
> That shows divine acceptance of the gift:
> The varied forms of liver and of gall,
> That give good omens: I the first devised
> The burning of the limbs enwrapped in fat
> And the long loin-piece; and therefrom to read
> Their riddling tokens, I was man's first guide.
> His eyes I opened to the signs of fire
> That erst were darkly veiled from mortal sight.[12]

[10]Plato. "Crito."
[11]Æsch. Prom. Vinct. 436-470., 476-506.
[12]*Ibid.* ll. 493-499.

This art of reading the signs of sacrifices was the most reputable form of divination in historic times. An example of its practice has already been seen in the passage quoted from the Argonautica (ch. vi., p. 99.) This example shows that not only the actual appearance of the entrails, and the manner in which the flame ascended, were of prophetic significance, but also the way in which the victims fell, and their demeanour at the altar before sacrifice. Every incident of a sacrifice, however trivial, had its meaning, and it was the business of the soothsayer to watch attentively and read these signs. However, numerous devices were adopted to ensure favourable omens. For example, a restive victim, or one which refused to approach the altar, presaged evil. The victim was coaxed rather than driven, and at the moment of sacrifice, water was dashed into his ears, causing him to bow his head as if in submission.

This "reading" of sacrifices became so regular a method of divination, that scarcely any undertaking was even begun without a preliminary sacrifice and reading of destiny therefrom. Very especially in war-time the omens were sought before any engagement, and the action of commanders was guided, even against their better judgment, by the pronouncement of the soothsayer. The Spartans in particular adhered slavishly to the directions of the omens, and the Athenian general Nikias probably owed his complete discomfiture, when besieging Syracuse, to this superstitious impotence in the face of adverse omens.[13] It is not surprising,

[13] Thuc. vii. 50.

therefore, to find that eventually the trammels of the diviner chafed the bolder spirits among Greek leaders. Xenophon, in fact, advised commanders to learn enough of the art of augury to keep a check on the dishonesty, greed and timidity of the soothsayers who accompanied the troops.

It has been indicated that this form of divination was efficacious wherever it might be practiced. But such a system would plainly gather power from localization and systematic practice in connection with some great shrine; and it is upon this ground, and this ground alone, that divination and oracle, diviner and priest, meet together, and in rare cases become identified. For at the sanctuaries of the great gods were domiciled some of the most famous families of diviners, who also inherited a semi-priestly position as inquiries of one god throughout succeeding generations. The Iamidae, at Olympia, already mentioned, attained, by the exclusive sanctity and high repute of their powers, almost to the level of an oracle of Zeus, to which appeal was made by states in search of guidance in matters of high public importance. Members of this family were held to carry with them wherever they went something of this divine infallibility, though away from Olympia their status was but that of the best of soothsayers. Thus the real distinction between the omen-oracle and ordinary divining lay in the inseparability of the one from a particular god in a particular locality, and through a particular medium, and the mobile and unattached nature of the other.

Oracles. The two main heads under which oracles may be distributed have already been indicated. The class of omen-oracles may be made to include dream and vision-oracles in cases where the applicant, not the hierophant, experiences the dream or vision. For in such cases the oracle resolves itself into the interpretation of omens, and only differs from ordinary divination in that the truth of the dream is guaranteed by the god to whom application is made. When the priest dreams on behalf of the applicant, the province of the directly inspired oracle, the highest phase of divination, is entered.

Omen-oracles were among the oldest and most popular in Greece. The means used to inquire of the gods were many and various. The oracle of Zeus at Dodona was perhaps the most famous, and here at least two if not three methods of inquiry were in use, all of which have a distinct bearing on the primitive nature of the god.

The whispering of the wind in the boughs of the sacred oak was interpreted by his priestesses, who went by the name of *peleiades* (doves), into response to the questions addressed to Zeus. Or, according to Servius,[15] the responses were similarly gathered from the rippling of a stream which ran through the sacred enclosure, while a third and wholly artificial means of obtaining omens was from the sound of knuckle bones (the sign of luck) suspended over a bronze vessel, and striking it when swinging in the breeze.

[14]Xen. Cyrop. i. 6. 2.
[15]Serv. ad. Aen. iii. 466.

All these three methods utilize the simple forces of nature, wind or water, and the sanctity of the tree belongs, as we have already seen, to an age of very primitive god-localization. Zeus was at once a god of the heavens and the earth, the air and the water and the growing things, and the media through which his advice was sought were the primitive representatives of the god himself.

The priests of this oracle are described by Homer as most primitive in their habits. They "sleep upon the ground, and wash not their feet,"[16] customs probably descending from the highest antiquity. But in spite of its Homeric fame, and the fact that it was the mouthpiece of Zeus himself, the oracle of Dodona never attained to the high place in the estimation of the Greeks which was held by the oracles of Apollo, especially that of Delphi. The subjects upon which Zeus was consulted at Dodona were for the most part trivial. As in historical times questions had to be written down upon leaden tablets, many of them have been preserved to the excavator of our own day.[17] They are addressed to Zeus Naïos (of the dew) and Dione. Some few are political questions asked by states in the neighbourhood of Dodona, but the majority are concerned with private affairs. A certain Agis asks who has stolen his mattress and pillows. A shopkeeper wants to know whether he can profitably extend his business by combining another trade (not specified) with his existing occupation. Another wants to know

[16]Il. xvi. 235.
[17]J. H. S., vol. i.

whether to invest his capital in sheep-farming, and so on. The one common characteristic of all is the unbounded faith in the worldly wisdom and personal interest of the god.

Other omen-oracles were scattered all over Greece, most of them being of purely local importance. At Bura in Achaea was an oracle of Heracles,[18] in which an answer was obtained by means of dice and a tablet. "The person who inquires of the god prays before the image, and after praying takes four dice and throws them on the table. Each die has a figure on it, and the meaning of each figure is explained on the tablet." In this case the only thing which elevates the divination to the level of an oracle is the prayer to Herakles beforehand. At the sanctuary of Demeter at Patrae[19] was a spring, of which inquiry was made in cases of sickness. After prayer and incense-burning, a mirror was let down so as to touch the water, and showed the sick person either living or dead. "So truthful is this water," says Pausanias, and quotes a parellel case near Cyaneae in Lycia, where Apollo presided over a similar spring.

At Pharae was an oracle of Hermes[20] which is simply the sanction by the god of a common method of divination used by Odysseus and mentioned above. The inquirer after making offerings of lights, incense and money, whispered his question in the ear of a statue of the god in the market place, then, stopping his ears, left the market. The first words

[18]Paus. vii. 25. 10.
[19]Paus. vii. 21. 12.
[20]Paus. vii. 22. 2.

he heard after taking his hands from his ears, he regarded as the answer to his question. For this, Pausanias quotes an Egyptian parallel.

But these omen-oracles were never held in the same estimation as those in which responses were drawn from visions and dreams. The repute of the strange vision-oracle of Trophonios at Lebadea caused the late identification of that local hero with Zeus. The brothers Trophonios and Agamedes were said to have been sons of Apollo,[21] and to have built the temple of Apollo at Delphi. But the strange story about the brothers is a folk-tale, the common property of all nations,[22] and belongs to a very early period of the world's history, so that Trophonios was probably a hero before Zeus or Apollo were gods in Greece, although the oracle was not so old as that of Delphi. Pausanias gives a full account of the method of consulting the oracle, not from hearsay but from personal experience. The whole of the method from the initial sacrifice onwards is a clear indication of the orgin of the oracle in ancestor-worship and inquiry of the dead.

A person who consulted this oracle had to observe preliminary rites of purification. He had to sacrifice to Trophonios and his children, to Apollo, Kronos, Zeus "the King," Hera "the Charioteer," and Demeter, surnamed Europa. At every sacrifice, a soothsayer took omens as to the disposition of Trophonios towards the applicant. The crowning sacrifice was that of a ram (always the proper sacri-

[21]Paus. ix. 36.
[22]Frazer. Paus, loc. cit, Note, Vol. v., p. 176.

fice to a dead hero). The sacrifice was made at night, over a pit, and Agamedes, the brother of Trophonios, was invoked as the blood of the victim descended into the earth. Then, if the omens from this sacrifice were favourable, the applicant was made to drink from two springs, one of Forgetfulness, in order to wipe out all memory of the past, and one of Memory, in order that he might remember all that he was about to experience. Next, having paid his devotions to the ancient image of Trophonios, which was only shown to inquirers of his oracle, he descended into the oracular pit by a ladder. At the bottom of the pit, which was faced with masonry, was a little cleft between the earth and the foot of the wall. Holding a honey-cake in each hand, and lying on his back, the inquirer inserted his legs into this cleft, and was then suddenly drawn in bodily underground. While underground, he either saw or heard mysterious sights or sounds, which he was made to recount to the priests on his return to the upper world by the way he went. These experiences were interpreted into the answer of the hero. The experience was so terrifying that it was some time before the inquirer regained the power of laughter.

The simulation of a visit to the lower world is too obvious to need amplification.

The comparison of Trophonios with Asklepios is a further indication of the nature of the oracle. For Asklepios was also a living man, and according to the evidence of pedigrees,[23] he and Trophonios would appear to have been contempora-

[23] Paus. ix. 37. 2. sqq.

ries, for both lived at the same time as Herakles. The chief oracle of Asklepios was at Epidaurus,[24] close to the mountain on which he was said to have been born. His exclusive province was naturally the healing of diseases and wounds, seeing that that had been his occupation in life. A number of most interesting inscriptions record the remarkable dream-cures effected by the god. After purification and sacrifice, the patient slept in a long ward (the *abaton*), open on one side, and dreamed of the manner of his cure by the god. When he awoke he found himself cured.

The inscriptions recording the manner of these cures have been discovered at Epidaurus, in the sanctuary of Asklepios, and are for the most part highly amusing.

The oracle of Amphiaraus at Oropos was also medical, and was consulted by the sacrifice of a black ram, and by dreaming.

The oracles of Trophonios and Asklepios were the two greatest of a long list of hero-oracles. It is probable that the earliest oracles of Greece were those of Gaia—the earth. But very far back in prehistoric times the tendency to ancestor worship arose, and with it grew the belief that the dead could read the secrets of the future. It is not too much to say that this belief is universal, and that it has no small following in our own country and times. The hero of a city or tribe, its great man, having gone down into the earth, was still within

[24] For fuller details concerning the sanctuary and worship of Asklepios see Kavvadhias „Τὸ Ἱερὸν τοῦ Ἀσκληπιοῦ," and Caton, "The Temples and Ritual of Asklepios."

call of those who revered him, and could "remember" both past and future, when revivified by sacrifices offered at his tomb. Thus the tomb of the departed hero became his oracle, and where we find the tomb of a hero hard by an oracle, we may, as a general rule, consider that oracle to have been associated at some time with ancestor-worship. The mysterious "Tholos" or "Thymele," the round building at Epidaurus, indisputably marks, as I believe, the grave of Asklepios. It corresponds exactly in form to the "bothros" the shaft running down from the surface of the earth to the grave of the hero in primitive times, and down which blood (or a ceremonial substitute for blood) was poured when the hero was invoked.

When Odysseus goes to Hades, he sacrifices sheep, for want of the proper victims a black ram and a barren heifer, which he promises to sacrifice when he reaches home. The shades drink the blood,[25] and regain substance and memory of the upper world. As it was not the privilege of ordinary mortals to visit the dead in their own homes, the offering had to be conveyed to them by pouring it into a pit, or into the earth. This offering having established a communion between the living and the dead, prophecy and advice might be elicited from the departed hero.

The "Persae" of Aeschylus[26] affords a striking example both of omens and of the oracular dead. Atossa, the mother of Xerxes, is disturbed by a

[25] Od. xi. 23. sqq.
[26] Æsch. Persae. i. 176. sqq.

dream of manifestly evil omen concerning her son. On awaking, she is about to sacrifice in order to expiate the omens, but her sacrifice is interrupted by an ominous flight of birds—an eagle pursued by a hawk, which tears the larger bird's head with its claws. Close upon these omens a messenger arrives with tidings of disaster, and Atossa calls up with prayers and offerings, milk, water, wine and honey, olives and garlands of flowers[27]—the shade of her husband Darius, to learn from him the details of her son's defeat, and the chances of his safe return.

When it is remembered that this scene was written by a man who himself fought against the Persian, and that it was enacted before an audience, every member of which remembered vividly the sack of Athens by Xerxes, and his subsequent defeat at Salamis—that the play was in fact a representation of contemporary events—it will be realized that such a scene must have been a living possibility to the Athenians of the fifth century. It is not surprising, therefore, that oracles of the dead, established in Greece in the earlier days before history, should have become permanent and public institutions in the lapse of time, or that the departed one should eventually become a god, as in the case of Asklepios.

Thus it is quite plain that the persistence of life and individuality beyond the grave was a belief accepted by the Greek, however little he may have

[27]Ibid. 610 sqq.

allowed the contemplation of a future state to enter into his thoughts.

The dead, the deities of the lower world, and those of the earth were naturally very closely associated, and all were credited with oracular powers in the highest degree. Thus, apart from the oracles of Apollo, which are by far the most numerous, almost all the oracles mentioned by Pausanias are those of heroes or of chthonic deities. In the Homeric hymn to Apollo,[28] even Hera prays to the Earth and the Titans, striking the ground with her hand, "and Earth, the nurse of life, was stirred, and Hera, beholding it, was glad at heart, for she deemed that her prayer would be accomplished." This method of calling the attention either of the infernal powers, or of the dead, indifferently, was a common Greek usage,[29] nor, as Mr. Lang has pointed out, is it confined to Greece, nor to ancient times.[30]

The confusion between the gods of the lower world and the spirits of the dead was easy, and happened very early. Primitive belief regarded the soul as buried with the body in the tomb, and thus the dead man could only be consulted at one place. But gradually this primitive idea gave place to the conception of a dark underworld where the spirits lived together, and could move about freely under the earth. Thus they might be called up at any point above ground, when a mighty chasm, or a

[28]Hom. Hymn. Apollo. 340.
[29]Il. ix. 568., xiv. 272. Æsch. Persae. 683. Paus. viii. 15. 3 (Beating the Underground Folk with rods).
[30]Lang. Homeric Hymns., p. 121.

cleft whence mephitic gases arose, seemed to point to a direct road of communication between the upper and lower worlds.[31]

But such spots as these were also naturally adapted for consulting the gods of earth, Poseidon the earth-shaker, Gaia, and Dionysos the twice-born. And thus necromancy and geomancy are so closely akin as to be frequently indistinguishable.

The history of the oracle of Delphi, the greatest of all oracles, contains in itself the history of the development of the idea through all its stages—geomancy to pure inspiration.

This, the greatest oracle of Apollo, was admittedly in the first place an oracle of Gaia and Poseidon.[32] The latter as god of the sea was not a mantic god, but as the earth-shaker he was naturally associated with Gaia in a district peculiarly subject to earthquakes. The she-dragon, which guarded the spring and which was slain by Apollo,[33] was doubtless some great snake, regarded as an embodiment of the earth-spirit in the time of the possession of Delphi by Gaia and Poseidon. There was also at Delphi a grave called that of Dionysos, but probably belonging originally to some local hero to whom had been attributed prophetic power, and later attached to a Dionysos of the Cretan vegetation-spirit type in the days when Crete was the head of the pre-Homeric civilization, for the Homeric Hymn contains strong testimony to the presence of Cretan influence at

[31]See Bouché-Lerq "Histoire de la Divination," Vol. iii. p. 364.
[32]Paus. x. 5. 6.
[33]Hom. Hymn. Apollo. 300.

Delphi—testimony which is rather clumsily manipulated to make it fit in with the imported supremacy of Apollo.[34]

Close to this grave was the famous cleft in the rock from which issued a mephitic gas—a spot easily recognised as the entrance to the lower world, an outlet for mantic spirts.

Thus, before ever Apollo arrived, Delphi was marked out by nature as the ideal spot for an oracle, whether of the gods of earth, or of the all-seeing dead. But these various sources of inspiration were all appropriated as his right by the god of prophecy, as he appropriated also the earth-oracle of Orpheus at Lesbos,[35] together with half the oracles in Greece.

A laurel tree stood close by the chasm in the rock before Apollo's time,[36] and Daphnis (Daphne = a laurel) was said to have been the first priestess of the oracle of Gaia. Here we have at once evidence of primitive "tree-worship," and the reason for the consecration of the laurel to Apollo. The connection between the laurel and the oracle was continued under the new regîme. The priestess of Apollo chewed laurel leaves and fumigated herself with burning laurel before entering the oracular cave, and Mr. Frazer suggests that this latter process may have contributed to her ecstatic state while delivering the oracle.[37]

But by far the most important factor in the Apolline oracle at Delphi was the gas from chasm. The

[34]Ibid. 393.
[35]Philostratus. Heroic. 6. 34. Vit. Apoll. iv. 44.
[36]Eurip. Iph. in Taur. 1245. sqq.
[37]Frazer. Paus. x. 5. 5. Note, Vol. v., p. 235.

intoxicating qualities of the vapour were discovered, according to Diodorus,[38] by a certain goatherd, whose goats, upon approaching the chasm, began to skip about in a remarkable fashion, and to make unusual sounds. The goatherd, coming up to investigate the matter, was similarly affected, and began to prophesy. The fame of this spread, and the place was deemed an oracle of Earth. Many people having lost their lives by leaping into the chasm in the divine frenzy, it was decided to appoint as prophetess one woman, who was provided with a three-legged stool or tripod, bestriding the chasm, on which to sit in security. According to Strabo,[39] the chasm was a perpendicular cleft, and the Pythian priestess, inspired by the gas, gave oracles, some in verse and some in prose, the latter being turned into verse by poets employed about the temple for this purpose. All writers are agreed that the oracular sounds were uttered by the woman in a state of frenzy or trance, for she was generally of humble origin and small intelligence, though of undoubted virtue. These sounds were probably disjointed and unintelligible exclamations which were interpreted by the attendant priests.

The chief characteristic which separated this and similar oracles of Apollo from the omen and dream oracles was directness of method. The Pythian priestess was the immediate mouthpiece of the god of prophecy—the god whose special prerogative it was to foreknow or to foretell the will of Zeus.[40]

[38]Diod. xvi. 26.
[39]Strab. ix., p. 419.
[40]Hom. Hymn. Hermes. 533.

Her utterances were divine, and from the highest and most certain source of information. In the hymn to which reference is made above, Apollo gives to Hermes the gift of ordinary divination from dreams and omens, but is unable to pass on the greater power to his foster-brother. The Apolline oracles were therefore upheld by the absolute authority of Zeus himself, and enhanced by the highly specialized prophetic faculty of Apollo : and the old oracles of the dead, who might foresee, but could not in any way control the future, were powerless to withstand the encroachments of a god who could not only prophesy, but fulfil the prophecy on behalf of heaven's highest ruler.

Thus the oracle of Apollo at Delphi was the final court of appeal in the Greek world, and was as far superior in reputation to all hero-oracles as Isaiah was superior to the witch of Endor.

It is remarkable that the Delphic oracle should have maintained its reputation for inspired truth during so many centuries. Various theories have been advanced to account for the high average of correct prophecy. It has been suggested that the Delphic priesthood controlled a widespread system of espionage in all the states of Greece, and acted upon the information so received, when interpreting the oracle. But the expense entailed by such a method would have been enormous, apart from the fact that the system would have been doomed to exposure from the outset. It is much more probable that the oracle relied upon a convenient ambiguity of phrase, and a shrewd use of whatever information

might come to the ears of the priesthood—indeed in the case of political inquiries it is certain that such information was often voluntarily forthcoming from some member of the deputation of inquiry, who wished to further the interests of his party by the sanction of the oracle. The famous oracle delivered during the invasion of Xerxes concerning the "wooden walls" of Athens,[41] was almost certainly "inspired" by the naval enthusiast Themistocles, with the happiest results.

Moreover it is notorious that "he who shoots often, hits sometimes," and a prophecy which was fulfilled would doubtless get more than its share of fame and publicity, while the less successful "shots" woud be conveniently forgotten, or accounted for on the score of some delinquency or neglect of preliminaries on the part of the inquirer. Indeed, Apollo himself is careful to take advantage of this loophole, when he says "whoso, trusting birds not ominous, approaches mine oracle, to inquire beyond my will, and know more than the eternal gods, shall come, I say, on a bootless journey, *yet his gifts shall I receive.*"[42] In the interests of the shrine's material prosperity the money was not returned, even if the goods failed to give satisfaction. Such a position is unassailable—the monopoly of a monopolist!

A conspectus of all Greek methods of divination shows that accidental omens are universal property: that omens drawn from sacrifices are not Homeric,

[41]Herod. vii. 141.
[42]Hom. Hymn. Hermes. 546.

but nevertheless may be indigenous in a less developed form than they assumed in historic times: that oracles of the Earth and the gods below belong to the very earliest stratum of Greek religion. The existence of oracles of the dead, and of ancestor worship, in the great Aegean civilization of the heroic age, is amply attested by evidence both monumental and legendary, while the divinely inspired oracles of Apollo belong distinctively to the more advanced civilization which grew up after the turmoil of the Dorian invasion. The intense devotion of the Dorians to the Delphic oracle: the Dorian population of Phocis—in which Delphi was situated—and the avowedly Dorian basis of the Delphic oracle of Apollo, all suggest that the prophetic aspect of the god was the outcome of a racial need felt in a far greater degree by the northern people than by the old Pelasgian and Pelasgian-Achaean population, which had been content with more material means of divination. The Apollo of Delphi was in fact the true Hyperborean god, and his prophetic function was the direct outcome of that temperament of speculative sentimentality which marks the majority of the fair-haired races, but which seems to exert but little influence over the more volatile and less contemplative races of southern Europe.

To sum up the whole question of the genuineness of oracles, it is only necessary to say that while many instances of barefaced imposture no doubt occurred, the greater oracles were not only honest endeavours to interpret the will of the gods, but also more impervious to corruption than any other Greek

institution. Even so late as the second century A.D. Pausanias[43] could cite but a single instance of the bribery of the Delphic oracle in the whole of its history. And indeed, a people to whom belief in the sanctity of oracles was almost the only article of faith, any attempt to tamper with the voice of God would have appeared sacrilegious to the point of impossibility, so that no motive existed for dishonesty upon the part of the interpreters of an oracle.

Thus the higher forms of Greek divination were, from their close association with the gods, safeguarded from the charlatanism and venality which too often characterized the wandering dream-reader and his kind, the quack parasites of a high and honourable calling.

[43]Paus. iii. 4. 4.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MYSTERIES

THUS far, it has been almost impossible to trace a moral influence in Greek religion. For the laws of the gods enjoined not morality but worship : the gods themselves were not moral, but merely powerful : the prayers of their worshippers were not for moral but for material benefits, and the human laws based upon religion were not prompted by morality, but by expediency. Virtue consisted, not in purity of conduct, but in ceremonial observance.

If this utilitarianism had been the sole basis of Greek religion it would be difficult to find in it the cause of the degree of permanency attained by a system which owned so slight a hold upon human nature. It was indicated in the opening chapter that the cause of the ultimate failure of the Greek system of worship was due to the lack of the seventh element, love, which is essential to the permanence of religion. But this element must have been present, even though in a much modified form, for Greek religion to have lasted as long as it actually did.

To find the true life of a religion in observances, savage in origin and often disgusting in detail, would seem a hopeless task. The confused and

barbaric imagery of the orgiastic cult of Dionysos, and the grotesque ritual of the mysteries of Demeter, show, on the surface but little sign of a high ethical teaching. Nevertheless it is in the mysteries of Dionysos and Demeter that the life-principle of Greek religion is to be sought, and it was in the form assumed by them at Eleusis that their moral aspect is best and most clearly emphasized.

"Mysteries" are common to all ages and all races, as Mr. Andrew Lang[1] and Mr. Frazer[2] have amply demonstrated. Moreover, making due allowance for difference of race, the symbolism employed in all these mysteries is practically identical. From this it follows that some universal truth or belief or, to say the least, some universal fact of nature was represented by them. This being so, the task before us is to extricate that truth from the wrappings of its symbolical presentment.

Before attempting this, it may be well to record the impression produced by the mysteries upon contemporary observers, a record which must obviously be drawn from scanty evidence, seeing that secrecy was the principal condition of initiation.[3]

The relation in which the Greek mysteries stood to the official religion was somewhat peculiar. Some mysteries, as those of Eleusis, were regarded as part of the state worship, and initiation, though always optional and voluntary, was regarded as the crown of religious life. Others of foreign introduction were sternly repressed by the civil power as subversive of

[1]Lang. "Homeric Hymns," p. 58, sqq.
[2]Frazer. Golden Bough, Vol. ii., p. 168, sqq.
[3]Paus. i. 38. 7.

morals and decency, a fact particularly strange in view of the very questionable form assumed by the native mysteries themselves.

In considering contemporary opinion of the mysteries it must not be forgotten that besides the Eleusinia, there were other native mysteries of local importance, all expressing much the same ideas in much the same way, but differing in detail. The Cabiric mysteries of Lemnos and Samothrace, and the Orphic, possibly Cretan in origin, to say nothing of the Lernaean and Agraean (or little Eleusinia,) all had their share of fame.

As the Eleusinia were conducted in historic times under the especial protection of the Athenian state, it is not surprising to find that the evidence of Attic literature places these mysteries upon a high pedestal. Isocrates[4] couples the mysteries with the fruits of the earth as the two great gifts of Demeter, and says that from the former the initiated gathered not only consolation in the present, but hope for the future even to death, a view echoed by Cicero[5] from Isocrates, when he speaks of the mysteries as giving not only a happy life but a hope for the future to the dying. Pindar[6] and the author of the Homeric Hymn to Demeter[7] are alike in claiming for the initiated a far higher and happier future existence than was possible to the uninitiated, while Sophocles, who held the gods in deep veneration, practically

[4]Isocrates (Panegyric) iv. 20.
[5]Cic. de Legibus ii. 14.
[6]Pindar. Fragm. 102.
[7]Hom. Hymn. Demeter 476-482.

holds out no hope for any save the initiated in the Mysteries of Demeter.[8]

Yet in spite of the unreserved approbation—nay, the whole-hearted faith—of such intellects as these, the irrepressible comedians of ancient Athens felt themselves at liberty to poke fun at the mysteries and the initiates,[9] while the philosophers commonly accounted nowadays as the highest expression of the Greek intellect, either passed them over in silence, or alluded to them with covert contempt. Socrates, an Athenian, did not even deem it worth while to become initiated, and Plato goes so far as to describe the mysteries as a positive bane, in that, by their power to expiate sins in both this and the next world, they tended to destroy the sense of responsibility in man,[10] precisely the same misconception which has been at the bottom of more than one attack upon Christianity. And Plato carries this misconception to the further extent of ignoring their religious principle and levelling his satire at their envelope of myth and ritual,[11] as if this were their beginning and end, a grotesque and empty husk.

Plutarch[12] went to the other extreme, and, while he himself, in bereavement, sought consolation in the "teaching" of the Dionysia, concerning the future life, did not hesitate to explain away the existence of Dionysos, Demeter and Persephone, and all the personages of the mysteries.[13] Diodorus, who was

[8]Soph. Fragm. 719. Poet. Scen. Graec.
[9]Philet. ap. Ath., Aristoph. Thesmoph.
[10]Plato. Repub. ii. 8.
[11]Plato. Repub. ii. 17.
[12]Plutarch. Consol. ad. Uxorem Opp. viii. 411.
[13]Plutarch de Facie in Orbe Lunae. ix. 715. sqq.

certainly rationalistic in his views, nevertheless found that the initiated became, through participation in the mysteries, morally better in every way.[14] Yet he considered—as we may also consider—that Demeter was the " mother Earth."[15]

The Romans, for the most part, overlooked the religious, and saw only the materialistic meaning of the mysteries, namely, the invention of agriculture, a view which had already been held by Prodicus,[16] a contemporary of Socrates.

The early Christian writers displayed a bitter hostility towards the mysteries.[17] They, again, like many before them, were unable to pierce the wrappings of superstition and symbolism, which enclosed the central truth of their own as of all other religions since the world began.

Mystery has ever been a powerful factor in religion. Secret rites, secret objects, secret laws of life, have always possessed an irresistible fascination for humanity. In almost every religion, ancient or modern, an inmost circle, a holy of holies, exists, into which it is the highest privilege of the worshipper to penetrate. Conversely there is scarcely any instance of the successful preservation of such a secret without the aid of some religious observance. Freemasonry may naturally be quoted as a modern instance of this fact. Whether the secrecy or the religion be the chief factor in such organizations, it

[14]Diod. v. 49.
[15]Diod. iii. 62.
[16]Prodicus. Themist. Or. xxi. 349A.
[17]Gregor. Naz. Or. xxxix. Libanius, Clement Alexandrinus and others.

is certain that only the combination of the two can ensure perpetuity for the rites and their meaning.

Thus the "mystery" of a religious system is its most precious possession, which is only imparted to those of its followers who are personally desirous of receiving it, and who undertake to preserve its secret inviolate. While the general principles of a religion may be intelligible to one uninitiated in its mystery, the *soul* of the system is hidden from all save those who have learnt the secret lesson of the mystery.

It has already been pointed out that the first intimation of the existence of a friendly god was conveyed through the productive power of the earth. This productive power was accordingly regarded as the manifestation of the friendly deity.

The desire of man, since Adam, is to become as a god. The development of agriculture was the line upon which man first began to learn the wisdom of the gods—to become, in a limited sense, god-like. Up to the beginning of an agricultural age—whenever that may have been—the conception of god in the mind of man had been as a hostile power, fitly represented by the wild animals which were the natural enemies of man. But even here the desire to share the nature and power of the god is manifested by an age of totemism, in which god and man meet in, and are both identified with, the totem animal. The motives which prompted this desire for identification with the god are obvious, and are most simply expressed by the modern proverb "dog does not eat dog." If man is able, through the

medium of the totem, to establish a blood-brotherhood with the deity, he is far more likely to be free from molestation both by that deity and by the animal selected as the medium.

Out of this point of view arose the mystic sacrifice, already discussed, and in it lies a logical reason both for the sacrifice of the human and the totem-victim. For as in the latter case, man sought to establish a blood-relationship with the god by means of partaking of the blood of his totem-representative, so also, in the former, the god was expected to acknowledge the relationship established by his acceptance of human blood. This human sacrifice should not be taken as indicating cannibalism, or a cannibal god, for it was purely sacramental.

However, it was an idea repulsive to man, save in a very low state of civilization. And when civilization reaches the stage in which it takes advantage of the reproductive power of the earth, to the extent of aiding that power by the sowing of crops, it is no longer low enough to accept human sacrifice as a natural method of getting into touch with the deity. But as the desire of maintaining close personal relations with God remains, so the mystic sacrifice of the representative animal survives; and even in the fully developed religious system of the Greeks, survivals of the triple identity of man, god, and totem, such as that typified by the bear-ritual of Brauronian Artemis, are frequently encountered.

But the great stride along the path of civilization which was entailed by the beginning of agriculture, brought with it a corresponding advance in the scope

of religious belief. The principle involved in the practice of agriculture is continuity of existence after apparent death : and as the natural tendency of primitive man is to find human analogies for the facts of nature, which he regards as manifestations of the deity, he naturally sought to establish a relationship with this divine principle of perpetuation. The intuitive consciousness of an immortal part existent in man helped the analogy between man and the sown seed, and thus it is to the great discovery of agriculture that man owes his first means of clearly symbolizing the idea of an immortal soul—an idea to which his representation of his gods by " the beasts that perish " had not been able to help him.

It has already been noticed that the chief advantage gained by initiation into the mysteries of Dionysos and Demeter was, according to the initiated, a clear hope for the world to come. This hope was not held out by the official religion, and therefore we may assume that the great " secret " of the mysteries was the assurance of immortality, conveyed by the commemoration of " the invention of agriculture," in which Prodicus saw the be-all and end-all of the mysteries.

To symbolize successfully the idea of life beyond the grave in the person of a god of vegetation and fertility it was necessary to represent the birth, the death and the resurrection of that god : and to establish a communion between the god of immortality, and those who sought assurance of eventually sharing that immortality with the god, the old method of partaking of the person of the god through the

medium of his material representative was the method most likely to be adopted. It will be seen that this was the method actually used in the Eleusinian, Dionysiac, and other Greek mysteries, in common with the "mysteries" of every corner of the world.

The "mysteries" themselves were simply, so far as can be ascertained, a theatrical representation of the adventures of Demeter in search of Persephone, and of the life-story of Iacchos, and the mystic Dionysos, of whom Iacchos was the second birth. Admission to these performances, which took place at night, and in a hall, or μέγαρον, inaccessible to the general public, was only to be obtained after the public ceremonies of purification and the oath of secrecy. Each new initiate was accompanied by a person already initiated, who acted at once as guide and sponsor for the new member. The exhibition of holy relics also formed part of the secret ceremony, and sacred writings concerning the histories of the divine personages were read to the assembled worshippers. These exhibitions, performances, and readings were not accompanied by any definite teaching or interpretation, the initiates being left to draw their own conclusions from the scenes and sounds which were calculated to play upon their imaginations, and upon the emotions of fear and hope, sorrow and joy.

The whole of this ceremony was preceded by a sacramental partaking of the flesh of a pig, which was the animal especially symbolic of the deities of the lower world. By this means the initiate be-

came identified for the time being with the deity, in whose sufferings and ultimate triumph he consequently participated in a highly personal degree.

Thus it was not to the intellect of the initiated that the appeal was made, but to the emotions and the sympathies. To attempt to rationalize the symbolism set forth, to reduce it to its lowest terms, as it were, would have been an impiety. In the Homeric Hymn to Demeter it is said "man must neither violate nor investigate these holy mysteries."[18] The deliberate aim of the mysteries was therefore to present the inmost truth of the religion in such a way that, even among the initiated, only those who were spiritually capable of understanding the highest truth should have it revealed to them, by their own intuition. The vast body of the initiated would see without seeing, and hear without understanding, a secret which lay beyond the powers of their minds to grasp, or of their hearts to appreciate, and would see in the mysteries no more than their purely materialistic meaning—the origin of agriculture.

The secret of the mysteries was kept, in fact, because there was no secret, save that which each individual could discover for himself in the scenes and ceremonies in which he took part. But none the less, those ceremonies were founded upon a great principle, which may be extracted from the stories associated with the divine personalities whose experiences were enacted in the mystery-worship.

The belief in a corn-spirit is universal. It was

[18]Hom. Hymn. Demeter, 478.

suggested in an earlier chapter that the owl-form of Athena may have originated in a belief that the owls who lived among the olive-trees embodied the spirit which was responsible for the existence of the olive. In the same way, the animals which are to be found amid the corn, and which escape from it when it is reaped, have been regarded in many lands as the embodied form of the corn-spirit. The wild pig, the horse, and the ox, are all forms of the corn-spirit, for this reason, and the hare, sacred to the gods of the lower world (in other words, of the earth) probably owes its peculiar and somwhat sinister sanctity to the same identification. Thus the pig and the horse were sacred to Demeter, or even identified with her, though the identification by no means implies that Demeter herself was regarded as a horse, or that Persephone was originally a pig.[19] The two forms, human and beast, were concurrent, and the latter was merely a natural manifestation of the goddess, as the former was her real form. In the Mystery-play of Eleusis, when Demeter was represented as descending into the realms of Hades to find Persephone, pigs descended with her. Thus the symbolization of the goddess by the animal was expressed, and additional force was given to the sacramental eating of the flesh of the animal which had preceded this representation.

The "corn-spirit" being the presiding genius of the crops, it is clear that if this spirit could be captured in its corporal form and kept among the fields, the harvest would derive benefit therefrom. This

[19]Lang. "Homeric Hymns," p. 63 sqq.

was accomplished by killing the animal which was supposed to represent the spirit, and by burying fragments of its body in various parts of the field. It happened, by no means infrequently, that a passing stranger, or the last of the reapers to finish his work, was considered to embody the corn-spirit, and thus human sacrifice in connection with gods of vegetation was of very frequent occurrence. Observances of this kind are common to all parts of the world, and were frequently accompanied by unnameable brutalities.[20] Survivals of these customs are to be traced in almost every celebration of the harvest-home in Europe, and the following example of the extraordinary vitality of the idea is taken from the *Daily Express* of July 16th of this year (1906.)

BERLIN, Sunday July 15.

A peasant named Francis Ogrodovski has been sentenced to seven years' penal servitude at Roheim, in the province of Posen, for a particularly atrocious form of grave desecration.

Ogrodovski opened a number of graves in the Jewish, Roman Catholic, and Protestant cemeteries, and removed the heads, and sometimes the limbs, from the bodies from motives of superstition.

He brought the fragments home and buried them in his stable and cow-stalls, and also in the fields where crops were growing, being firmly convinced that he would thereby protect the horses and cattle from disease and ensure good crops.

Ogrodovski was denounced by his wife after he had beaten her. At his trial he protested that he had no criminal intent in mutilating the bodies, and that it was the accepted belief among the peasantry that portions of corpses taken from graves soon after burial brought "good luck."

It is not difficult to see in this "superstition" a modified form of the sacrifice of a human "corn-spirit."

[20]Frazer, "Golden Bough," Vol. ii., p. 241 sqq.

In no case was the body of the victim, whether human or beast, buried *whole*. Mutilation was an essential part of the observance, alike in Greece and elsewhere, a particularly horrible example being the custom of the Ghonds of India. This process of mutilation is bound up with a ritual which cannot be described here, but which has a direct reference to the destruction of the living plant and the distribution of its seed, with the object of ultimate increase. The extremely complicated relationships of the Mother-Earth goddess and her offspring in the mystic stories are symbolic of the return of the grain to the earth whence it came, and this "rotatory" principle of reproduction gave rise to the most confused inter-identification of the mystic persons.

The principal characters in the mystic dramas present a dual symbolism of the reproductive processes of agriculture. Persephone descends into the lower world; for a third of the year Demeter is bereft of her child, and the flowers and fruits of the earth are hidden away. The disconsolate mother mourns and seeks the lost one, who at last returns, bringing with her the spring and its heavy-scented flowers, reminiscent of the shades whence she has come. But she has eaten "fairy-food," and so must return again to the shades, as every coming winter shears the fields and woods. Wife, but not mother, Persephone is the self-contained reproductive spirit of the grain—past, present and future, mother, self, and daughter in one person. This continuity of person completes a circle of immortality, so that Persephone, herself the spirit of all increase from the

mother-earth, could not be represented as a mother, for she is the perpetual daughter of the Earth, whence first she sprang : born again, and yet again, and containing in herself the vital principle of her future existence.

Nor is the story of Iacchos (the mystic Dionysos) at all different in principle, though in detail it is more forcible and often most revolting. The worship, which was early developed in Crete, may have borrowed many elements from the east, from Syria, by way of Cyprus, and there are details which may perhaps have been borrowed from the Egyptian worship of Osiris. The grandfather of Orpheus is said to have taken the ritual from Crete to Thrace, where he found a still more orgiastic form of the same worship in force, in which were also many Phrygian elements. The more violent characteristics of these Asiatic forms of vegetation-spirit worship were as a rule repugnant of the Greek, whose tendency was to smooth and soften and refine the primitive barbarism of his ritual, and it was in the attempt to modify the Thracian ritual that Orpheus lost his life. The progress of the Dionysiac worship from Thrace southwards into Greece was met with sustained and often bloody opposition, of which the conflict between Pentheus and the Maenads is typical. But the Dionysiac element in the Mysteries as practised at Eleusis was far purer, and may be said to have come more directly from Crete than did the orgies of the wine-god as observed in drunken Thebes, where, as indicated in Chapter III., the grosser characteristic of the Dionysos-worship swamped the deeper ethical

meaning of his mysteries. As a matter of fact, however, outside the mysteries, Dionysos was universally regarded by the Greeks as the god of the harvest merry-making and the vintage-festival, and the rejoicings at his feasts were marked by boisterous horseplay and sheer lightheartedness. Yet in the Anthesteria at Athens, the first feast of the spring, when the wine-casks of yester-year were first opened, the third day of the feast was devoted to sacrifices to the gods of the lower world, and to the souls of those who were lost in Deucalion's flood, and the name of the feast is closely associated with the return of departed ghosts.[21]

As a matter of fact it is almost impossible to draw any clear line between the god of the vintage and him of the lower world. It is more than doubtful whether his worshippers drew any such line, for in the history of the god the two ideas are inextricably interwoven as they are in the story of Demeter and Persephone. Dionysos-Zagreus was said to be the son, Cretan-born, of Zeus, but not by Hera, who, jealous of the base-born child, sent the Titans to slay him. They enticed the child with toys, and having got hold of him, tore him limb from limb. But Zeus returning, reduced the Titans to ashes with his thunderbolts, and Athena, saving the heart of Dionysos, brought him to life again. In close connection with this story were the Cretan Feasts of Raw Flesh,[22] in

[21]Verrall, in J. H. S., Vol. xx. 115.

[22]Eurip. Fragm. 475. ap. Porph. de Abst. iv. 19. See Harrison "Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion," p. 479 sqq.

which a bull was torn to pieces by the teeth of the worshippers, while the flesh was yet warm. This was clearly a sacramental proceeding. The bull was the symbolic animal of Dionysos, and the worshippers, in eating the bull, were taking into themselves the individuality and nature of the god, whose own salient characteristic was that he was twice born and immortal. Thus the eater of his flesh became also twice-born—once humanly, once in spirit and by identity with the god—and so immortal. The conclusion is irresistible, though the ceremony was not universal, and there is no reason to suppose that it obtained at Eleusis, where the grosser elements of the sacramental eating were smoothed away. The agricultural aspect of Dionysos is shown by his titles of Tree-Dionysos, Phytalmios (of growth) and those titles which have reference to the vine and, as Miss Harrison has shown, to the cereal sources of strong drink; thus he is a god not only of wine, but also of beer.[23] There is no doubt that much of the extravagance of the worship of Dionysos outside the Mysteries was due to alcoholically-induced enthusiasm. It is quite easy to see how the ecstasy of drunkenness might be regarded as possession by the god, through the use of whose property that condition was induced: and thence the idea of identity with the god was very easily deduced. It was the close connection between drunkenness and divine possession that was the great obstacle to the spread of the Dionysiac worship in Greece, but the Eleusinian mysteries were able to represent the latter

[23]Harrison "Prolegomena," Ch. viii. p. 413 sqq.

without the aid of the former, and to emphasize the older and more general aspect of Dionysos as a god of fertility. It was the Thracian form of his worship, acclimatized in Greece by the legend of his Theban birth, which perpetuated the grosser side of Dionysos, and represented him as a magnificent drunken savage, inspired and terrible, with, however, but little of the symbolism of immortality which was his in the Athenian and Eleusinian forms of his worship.

The process by which the Mysteries accumulated their confused and puzzling myths is instructive. In the first place, myth does not precede belief. The belief in the vegetation-spirit must have existed before that spirit could possess a personality around which to hang the myths. Man was confronted by phenomena extremely incomprehensible, and therefore indubitably divine, beneficent and therefore to be associated with a kindly, or "good" power. In the endeavour to translate these phenomena into terms of human life, we are led into a tangle of relationships, which, though intended merely to represent the self-reproductive nature of the grain and the succession of the seasons, are, in their anthropomorphic dress, repugnant to morality, decency, and humanity, at any rate so far as we can judge from the frankly hostile criticism of the Christian fathers. But as these myths, in all their crudity, meant to the primitive Greek no less than the best gift of the gods, they naturally became associated with other myths and other ritual, which belonged to other and almost equally important landmarks of life. The

ceremony which attended the arrival of a boy at man's estate was the most important in the life of the savage, and consisted of a physical ordeal, combined with instruction in such moral principles as were deemed expedient for the existence of the tribe, and with a fuller knowledge of the rites of the tribal religion. The method of teaching morals in these ceremonies was often the extremely crude one of exhibiting an example of the sin to be avoided, and there are many incidents, both in the myth and in the ritual of the Eleusinia, which may be traced to this origin. The ceremony of marriage was also so closely akin to the central idea of the corn-spirit worship, viz., the perpetuation of life, as to fall into its place in the symbolism of that worship as a matter of course. It was from the combination of the two celebrations—that of the life-principle and that of the transition from child to man, with marriage as the natural concomitant of both—that the fully-fledged mystery was evolved. And the sacramental identification of the initiate with the god of perpetuation brought prominently forward the principal factor in the perpetuation of humanity.

According to Euripides[24] the oldest, the most powerful—and the most neglected—of the gods, was Love. In the Cabiric mysteries, the three principal figures were Axieros, Axiokersos and Axiokersa. Stripped of their honorific prefix "Axio," these mysterious names read : Kersos and Kersa, and Eros or Love. They are in fact, the male and female factors in the perpetuation of species, and Love, the

[24]Eur. Hippolytus. 535.

power which quickens and produces. In this direct and forcible anthropomorphism, Love is shown as the force which "makes the world go round," the influence without which all life would cease to exist. This was the idea which the Eleusiniam mysteries endeavoured to convey through the confused and elaborate symbolism of the origin of agriculture. The great truth which underlay all these mysteries was that immortality only becomes possible through the instrumentality of Love. And though the immortality actually presented was scarcely more than the physical perpetuation of life, the initiate was left to read into it the spiritual perpetuation of the soul, which is the true immortality.

Thus the seventh element of worship was enshrined in the Mysteries—the oldest, the crudest, and yet the truest part of Greek worship. Very far from being a "revelation," very far from comprehending the depth and height of the principle that they enunciated, the Mysteries none the less were a step towards the identification of Love and Life. The Olympian gods could not represent this principle, for they were altogether apart from man,—*they had never been human.* It was left to the gods of the earth, and of the lower world, and to a divinity who had been mortal and had suffered death before his second birth as a god, to be the vehicle of the lesson, to be accessible to humanity, and to enter into the very bodies of his worshippers, making them one with the eternal gods, and to fill their hearts with the hope of that immortality beyond death which he himself had achieved.

Finally: to the gods of Olympus, the Greek prayed and offered sacrifice, because they were the powers which governed his little span of life. They were the ruling powers, the patron-saints, as it were, of his various occupations and interests: most essentially they were the gods of life, in the city, the field, the sea and the mountains. Pride of race, pride of power, pride of skill, all served to the glorification of these gods of day, of vigour and hot-blood, of happiness and light. But it was to the ghosts of the dead, and the rulers of the dead, to the old earth-spirits of those far-past savage days, when man rubbed shoulders with nature, and could still see God, though distorted through the ever-thickening mist of imagination and fancy—to these it was that the Greek turned with mingled fear and hope, from these he sought some comfort against the day when he too should cross the dark threshold of Persephone. These were the eternal gods, the great facts of life and death, gloomy yet hopeful, beside whom the Olympians of Homer appear but as the delicate fancy of a naturally joyous and artistic people, gods of a day for men of a day.

As the soul is the immortal part of man, so it is the deity of departed souls who is the real god of a people, the god of here and hereafter. The god, incarnate of a human mother—who suffered death, and was buried—who descended into the world of shades, and, returning thence, joined the company of the gods of life—the Dionysos of the Mysteries, was not the god of a single people, a single nation, a single age. The revelation, the sacramental

brotherhood, which the Greek sought in the mysteries, was but a foreshadowing of that greater sacrament which has filled the world with the hope of immortality and of kinship with God for the last two thousand years.